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# CURRICULUM REFORMS AND SOCIAL CHANGE:

## AN EXAMINATION OF THE ROLE AND PURPOSE OF THE PNC GOVERNMENT IN INTRODUCING CURRICULUM REFORMS IN GUYANA.

(1965 - 1985)

BY ©

KAMNASARAN

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

IN

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SUBMITTED BY Kamnasaran

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF Doctor of Philosophy

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# DEDICATION

*This Thesis is dedicated to my son - Deepak, wife - Devi, daughter - Bharati, mother - Ananti, father - Shivprasad, and all my brothers and sisters. They all took a keen interest in my academic career and were proud about the successful accomplishment of this task.*

# ABSTRACT

This thesis attempts to describe and analyze the types of curriculum reforms that were developed and implemented in the primary and secondary schools in Guyana from 1965 to 1985 by the Burnham Government to achieve socio-economic development.

Various models and theories of curriculum development proposed by different educators were examined to determine the approaches to curriculum planning by the Burnham Government. But the study revealed that, although some had an influence on the development of curriculum in the society, they were of little use in explaining fully the curriculum changes that were taking place. However, the empirical or the technical approach to curriculum development was found to be the most consistent with the authoritarian style used by the Guyanese Government in introducing these changes.

The main conclusion that can be drawn from this research is that the Guyanese Government under Burnham, attempted to use the educational system to shore up its legitimacy by focusing on two functions of education: 1) the technical function aimed at producing the type of human resources required for economic development. 2) an ideological function, that is, the political socialization of the population aimed at building up legitimacy for the regime.

The efforts to develop the human resource in the society were not very successful due to a number of factors including the massive brain drain which occurred, the decline of the

economy and the lack or poor quality of the facilities made available to the educational system.

To achieve its goal of political socialization, the Government took control of all schools and the curriculum development process which allowed it to introduce a number of new subject areas and extra curricular activities.

However, these efforts were not very effective and the Government therefore became increasingly dependent on the Repressive State Apparatus to help ensure that some attempts were being made by the population to accept its mandated programs. The outcome was a very authoritarian State.

The final observation made by the researcher is that curriculum change in Guyana would continue to fail, unless attempts are made to bring about fundamental democratic changes simultaneously in the socio-political and economic systems as well as in education.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am extremely grateful to the many individuals and organizations that have contributed significantly to the completion of this thesis. It is unfortunate that all the individuals cannot be mentioned, but I wish to extend my deep appreciation and gratitude to all of them who played the most crucial role in this research project.

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# CHAPTER 1

# INTRODUCTION

## Introduction

> Education is always an extension of political purpose and must be seen as a primary, perhaps the primary agent that is available for that purpose. (Michael Manley: 1974).

Ex-colonial societies that have gained independence have continued to face the problem of fostering capital accumulation and at the same time strengthening and consolidating their legitimacy. These two major goals, that of ensuring capital accumulation for economic development and establishing legitimacy, are usually contradictory in nature. For instance, when the economic development of the country is being adversely affected because of the lack of capital, the legitimacy of the State[1] also tends to be threatened. In this situation, resistance to the State is likely to develop and this might lead to social disruption and subsequently to an increase in the cost of maintaining social order through the use of the Repressive State Apparatus (RSA). The diversion of funds to expand the RSA, especially its military and paramilitary institutions, as happened in Guyana, further tends to impede the process of capital accumulation. The outcome will be an even further reduction in the ability of the State to provide certain public services such as quality education which the citizens demand and which might help to shore up its legitimacy.

---

[1] The State often refers to a complex of institutions such as the Government including the bureaucracy, the military, the judiciary, and the representative assemblies.

The role of education in these societies is also influenced by the two conflicting demands for capital accumulation and the establishment of legitimacy for the ruling group, since schools are not neutral sites, but serve as socio-cultural, economic and political apparatus to help the State to achieve its goals. This is often manifested in the curriculum of the schools which serves the dual function of (a) cognitive development i.e. by students learning or acquiring the knowledge and skills required to help ensure economic growth and further capital accumulation and (b) cultural transmission or socialization whereby the values, attitudes, habits and dispositions inculcated in students also help to perpetuate the existing social relations in the society and to legitimize the State.

Political leaders and educators have seen schools as a major mechanism for the political socialization of the young. As indicated in the quotation above, Manley saw education always as an extension of the political process. Likewise, Hirsh (1988:110) contends that "school is the traditional place for acculturating children into our national life" and as a result education has tended to be an important "tool" of the State. Dewey (1916) clearly points out that, historically only the State had the resources and the mandate to develop nationalism through the school curriculum. Kirst and Walker (1977) illustrate the influence of Government on curriculum change by citing Richard Nixon's campaign on the "right to read" which resulted in the production of "Sesame Street" by the United States Office of Education. They go on to point out that, the Government has the capacity to seize the initiative in curriculum matters, if the need arises. Frith and Corrigan (1977) posit that, State education is one of the most important forms of maintaining hegemony, but it can also ensure equality of opportunity, depending on the context. They further argue that, there is a similarity of purpose of education in regard to political socialization in both capitalist or socialist societies.

Bowles and Gintis (1976) emphasize the point that in creating equality of opportunity in education and schooling in a socialist setting, the redistribution of economic wealth is very important. But the education system is usually ineffective in helping to bring about that redistribution because of what they call the "corresponding principle".

However, unless the basic economic requirements for food, shelter and medical care are met, socialist principles of Government will not be successfully accepted by the population, despite the indoctrination which might be attempted through a change in the school curriculum. It seems therefore clear, that, even though changes in curriculum might be geared to socialize students into the political ideology of the Government, its effectiveness depends on the social and economic conditions in which the curriculum "message" is being transmitted.

## Setting of the Study

This study was undertaken in Guyana, a former British colony which became independent in 1966 and a Republic in 1970. Although the country occupies an area of 214,970 square km. or approximately the size of Great Britain, it has a population of 756,072 or a density of 3.7 per km. making the equitable provision of educational facilities a costly exercise (Europa Year Book: 1988). Guyana experienced a negative growth rate in its population in the 1980s due mainly to international migration rate, estimated at approximately 10,000 per year, low fertility rate of 29.3 crude birth per 1,000 and high mortality rate of 45 per 1,000 life births (World Bank Report: 1986:i).

Guyana is bounded on the west by Venezuela, on the east by Surinam, on the south and southwest by Brazil and on the north by the Atlantic Ocean. Its Atlantic coastline is about 270 miles long. Along this coastline is a narrow strip of land varying in width from 10 to 12 miles. This region of the country is economically the most important and has dominated its history. While this region is 6 feet below sea-level at high tide and comprises only 4% of the total land area, it contains about 90% of the country's population.

The early economic activities of the country focused on sugar production and depended on slave, indentured and later free labour. Immigrants were brought in from various countries to work on the sugar plantations and the conglomeration of peoples of various ethnic backgrounds needed to sustain the economic endeavours of the country makes Guyana known as the "land of six races". The ethnic groups are the East Indians/Indo-Guyanese, Black/Afro-Guyanese, Chinese, Mixed Races, Amerindians, Portuguese and other Europeans. According to the 1980 census, Indo-Guyanese accounted for 51% of the population, Afro-Guyanese 31%, Mixed races 12%, Amerindian 4% and Chinese, Portuguese and Europeans 2% (Singh: 1988).

As a former British colony, Guyana shares the same history, language, culture and education as the English speaking Caribbean countries. It was one of the founding members of the Caribbean Free Trade Association (CARIFTA) in 1967, the Caribbean Common Market or Community (Caricom) in 1973, and one of the leading member States to support the establishment of the Caribbean Examination Council (CXC) in 1972. However, unlike the other sister states in the English speaking Caribbean, Guyana suffered a reversal in the process of democratic political development because the country had no fair and free elections between the period 1968 and 1991. As would be later discussed, this had important repercussions on education. In 1992 however, this situation changed and a democratically elected Government came to power.

## Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to describe and analyze the attempts made by the Burnham Government from 1965 to 1985 to change the curriculum of the primary and secondary schools in Guyana to accomplish its two goals which were to provide (a) legitimacy for the State and (b) the skills and knowledge necessary to foster economic development. Included in these changes were: (a) the diversification or vocationalization of the curriculum at the higher grades of the primary schools, (b) the establishment of the multilateral and community high schools and (c) the introduction of the Caribbean Examination Council (CXC) Examination.

The study also investigates the curriculum implementation process to determine what factors within the schools and society, local educators saw as aiding or inhibiting curriculum changes in the primary and secondary schools.

The working hypothesis in this study is that, given the authoritarian nature of the PNC Government, it was faced with the problem of legitimacy and therefore used the educational system through curriculum reforms to shore up its legitimacy. This was particularly important for two reasons: (a) the PNC

Government lacked popular political support over the years as a result of fraudulent elections and (b) low levels of economic production which severely affected the economy as a consequence of governmental control of the economy, mismanagement, corruption, discrimination and massive brain drain.

## Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in the fact that, so far, little attempt has been made to investigate curriculum reforms in the primary and secondary schools in the post-independence era (1965 to 1985) in Guyana. This research hopes to fill that gap. It is of particular importance because the curriculum changes were being introduced by an authoritarian Government with a strong motivation to use education as a major instrument in moulding the political attitudes of the future citizens to support its activities and programs.

The People's National Congress (PNC) Government was authoritarian in the sense that "the ruling class persists in asserting its "right" to control the state machinery in the face of obviously declining electoral support and political popularity". In this situation, it openly resorted to "the use of the coercive and ideological arms of the state to contain the "opposition". During this process it removed "the possibility of any legal or constitutional succession of governments" (Thomas: 1984:82-83).

The research will also illuminate some of the socio-economic and educational factors within and outside the school which facilitated or impeded curriculum changes. The study hopes to be of some practical benefit to educators and should interest the education authorities, curriculum planners and implementers in Guyana, as well as, policy makers in their attempts to introduce and achieve curriculum reforms. Further, the findings might lead to the development of more appropriate strategies by Guyanese educators in their efforts to overcome some of the resistance to curriculum changes or maximize the use of those factors which have been shown to facilitate such changes.

## Organization of the Study

The following represents a plan of the thesis.

Chapter One presents an overview of the purpose and significance of the study.

Chapter Two provides a description of the background of Guyana's economic and political developments during the period under review. This was necessary in order to provide the reader with a full understanding of the context in which the curriculum changes were being introduced.

Chapter Three. Since the thesis focuses on curriculum and curriculum development, it was considered useful to review some of the philosophical and epistemological views about the nature of knowledge. Included are such schools of thought as Realism, Rationalism, Relativism, Empiricism, Phenomenology and Critical Theory. An attempt has also been made to examine their implications for curriculum development. The chapter then discusses educational issues within the context of Third World Countries, focusing on curriculum models and knowledge which are utilized by Third World Countries in shaping their educational programs to achieve modernization or economic growth. In this context, Structural Functionalism, Modernization and Human Capital and Dependency Theories are examined as they relate to education for development.

Chapter Four discusses education in Guyana in the pre and the post colonial periods, along with its structure, efforts at curriculum reforms, teacher training and administration.

Chapter Five focuses on the research methodology utilized in this study.

Chapter Six provides an analysis of the data collected during the field work. It deals with the attitudes and views of teachers about the process of curriculum planning, the kinds of skills which were imparted and evaluated in the schools, the goals of curriculum changes as they were perceived by these education practitioners, teachers' evaluation of these goals, the diversification of curriculum in the secondary departments of primary schools and in the

Multilateral and Community High Schools and the introduction of the CXC examination. In addition, an evaluation of the impact of these changes for jobs and development features in the chapter which also focuses on those factors within and outside the school that were considered aiding or inhibiting curriculum reforms.

The final chapter presents a summary of the findings, and draws conclusions from the data. It also provides some recommendations based upon the findings of the study.

# CHAPTER 2

# RECENT POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS IN GUYANA

## Introduction

In order to comprehend the reasons for educational and/or curriculum changes introduced by the PNC Government, it is imperative to get a picture of the economic and political situation in Guyana during the period of the study. It is being suggested in this study that, the Burnham Government used the Repressive State Apparatus (RSA) which included the security forces and the judicial system ie. the courts and prisons along with the Ideological State Apparatus (ISA) such as the political party, mass media, church, trade unions, work places and schools to establish legitimacy for its authoritarian method to govern. This Government also extended its control over the economy by nationalizing foreign and even local industries and corporations, it also controlled imports and exports, licensing arrangements and the allocation of foreign exchange with a view of transforming the society into a socialist one. These measures resulted in an unprecedented decline of the economy which affected all aspects of life in the society.

To ensure absolute control and dominance of all institutions and social relations in the society, the Burnham

Government, as many writers such as Rodney, Tennessee, Singh, Roopnarine, Lutchmon et al, noted, utilized the tactics of a "police State" against the population as a means of compensating for its inability to win voluntaristic support for its management of the affairs of the society.

This analysis of curriculum reforms in Guyana is set against the background of the socio-political and economic changes which occurred in the country during the period of the study, since these were important in understanding the nature of the educational programs that were provided by the PNC Government.

There is a growing recognition of the importance of the social, political and economic factors in understanding curriculum changes, although it is difficult to argue that anyone of these factors is more important than the other. As Apple suggests

> We must complement economic analysis with an approach that leans...on a culture and ideological (political) orientation if we are to completely understand the complex ways social, economic and political tensions and contradictions are mediated in the concrete practices of educators as they go about their business in schools.... (Apple: 1981:111)

In other words, the corpus of formal knowledge, skills, attitudes and values which are offered in the schools and preserved in the curriculum of schools, in the modes of teaching, and in the principles, standards and forms of evaluation, are already a choice made from a much larger universe of possible social knowledge and principles. These are dictated by the political, economic and socio-cultural influences in the society, especially as they are determined by the dominant groups. In short, the role of the dominant group in influencing what curriculum content comes to be selected for schools is increasingly being regarded as crucial. Attention will now focus on the economy of the country during the post independence period.

## Brief Post-Independence Economic Development

The Guyanese economy is based mainly on the primary production of bauxite, sugar and rice (the last is a peasant industry). In other words, like most third world economies, it is primarily the exporter of raw materials and importer of food, machinery, manufactured goods, petroleum and petroleum products. Sugar was dominated by British companies while Canadian and American companies developed the bauxite industry.

Bauxite, sugar and rice account for about 70% of total export earnings (Europa Year Book: 1988). In 1985, according to the estimates of the World Bank, Guyana's Gross National Product (GNP) per capita, measured by an average of prices between 1983 and 1985 was US $500, the third poorest in the western hemisphere. This was largely due to a steady decline in production since 1970 as can be seen in the fall in the output figures in the three traditionally dominant areas of production, observed in Table 2.1.

**TABLE 2.1 PRODUCTION OF THE THREE DOMINANT SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY FROM 1970 TO 1989 ('000 METRIC TONS)**

| | Productive Sector | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Bauxite | | |
| Year | Sugar | Rice | Calcine | Dried | Alumina |
| 1970 | 316.0 | 144.6 | 704.1 | 2,327.1 | 317.1 |
| 1974 | 340.8 | 153.3 | 726.0 | 1,383.0 | 311.0 |
| 1975 | 300.4 | 60.0 | 778.0 | 1,350.0 | 294.0 |
| 1976 | 322.5 | 110.0 | 729.0 | 969.0 | 265.0 |
| 1977 | 241.5 | 211.5 | 709.0 | 879.0 | 273.0 |
| 1978 | 324.8 | 182.0 | 570.0 | 1,021.9 | 236.0 |
| 1979 | 298.3 | 142.8 | 568.0 | 1,058.5 | 159.7 |
| 1980 | 269.6 | 166.4 | 591.6 | 1,005.5 | 211.5 |
| 1981 | 300.8 | 163.0 | 505.4 | 982.0 | 167.1 |
| 1982 | 287.0 | 179.0 | 385.0 | 958.0 | 93.0 |
| 1983 | 251.8 | 147.6 | 310.0 | 761.0 | - |
| 1984 | 237.9 | 181.1 | 517.0 | 823.0 | - |
| 1985 | 246.9 | 156.1 | 551.9 | 1,050.3 | - |
| 1986 | 249.4 | 169.4 | 443.7 | 1,025.9 | - |
| 1987 | 224.5 | 146.0 | 426.0 | 933.2 | - |
| 1988 | 170.2 | 130.0 | 400.8 | 921.2 | - |
| 1989 | 167.4 | 142.3 | 298.3 | 1,020.0 | - |

**Source: (1) The World Bank, Guyana: A Framework for Economic Recovery. 1986:144-145.**
**(2) Glimpse of the Global Economy: Guyana Position. 1987:9**

Factors which contributed to the deterioration of the economy were: scarce foreign exchange earnings due to the low levels of production and decline in the world prices for locally produced commodities, lack of funds to purchase spare parts for machinery, chemicals and fertilizers, poor infrastructure and transportation facilities, low wages for workers, inefficiency and corruption along with the decline of the managerial and technical skills as a result of substantial emigration mainly the Asian and later even Afro-Guyanese sector of the population (Guyana: Economic Recovery Program and Beyond: 1989). In addition, repressive industrial relations practices, worker's alienation and the collapse of morale of the general population, also contributed to the country's failure to produce (Thomas: 1983, Singh: 1988).

Real per-capita income therefore fell since the mid-1970s. This was largely due to the fact that the GNP per head was estimated to have decreased at an average of 0.2% per head in real terms between 1965 and 1985 i.e during the years of the Burnham era. Guyana's GDP declined by 12.4% in real terms in 1982, and a further 9.6% in 1983 (Europa Year Book: 1988). In addition, the public debt which stood at G $ 267 million in 1970, had risen to G $ 673 million in 1974 and to G $ 1.3 billion in 1976. At the end of 1981, it was over G $ 3.1 billion of which G $ 1.9 billion was internal and G $ 1.2 billion external (Thomas: 1983). As can be seen in Table 2.2, these figures further increased as the years progressed.

At the end of 1975, the country's net international reserves were approximately G $ 200 million, but by the end of 1977, the figure was minus G $ 100 million and at the end of 1980, minus G $ 396 million (Thomas: 1983). This downward slide continued and by 1985, the foreign exchange reserve had slumped to minus US $ 500 million (Mirror: April, 1992:3). The acute shortage of foreign currency provoked an extension

**TABLE 2.2 GUYANA'S EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL DEBT BETWEEN 1985 AND 1989**

| | 1985 | 1986 | 1987 | 1988 | 1989 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| EXTERNAL | 1,610.1 | 1,642.8 | 3,854.3 | 3,889.9 | 14,603.2 |
| INTERNAL | 1,803.5 | 2,003.7 | 2,347.1 | 2,505.9 | 2,371.7 |
| TOTAL | 3,413.6 | 3,646.5 | 6,201.4 | 6,395.8 | 16,974.9 |

**Source: Budget Estimates G$ in Million**

of import controls and a thriving illegal trade in the smuggling of foodstuffs and other goods from neighbouring countries.

There was also an expanding illicit trading in foreign currency which provided a new avenue of employment for many. The "parallel", "underground", or "informal" sector of the economy came to be increasingly more important in comparison to the formal economy.

Between 1976 and 1981, annual inflation rates had been in the double digit figure and it was officially understated at 25% in 1982. By 1991, the budget deficit had increased to 30% of the GDP. In fact, as can be seen in Table 2.3, since the PNC Government took office in 1965, there was no budget surplus in any year. Instead, there was always a large deficit. The money value of the gross internal debt also grew remarkably between 1980 and 1991 as can be seen in Table 2.4.

**TABLE 2.3 BUDGETS FROM 1960 TO 1989**

| Year | Expenditure Current/Capital | Revenue Current/Capital | Surplus/Deficit |
|---|---:|---:|---:|
| 1960 | 51,521,000 | 54,874,025 | +3,353,025 |
| 1961 | 54,948,797 | 56,618,825 | +1,670,023 |
| 1962 | 63,844,854 | 59,000,820 | -3,377,369 |
| 1963 | 67,700,567 | 67,500,587 | -199,980 |
| 1964 | 79,585,807 | 77,585,987 | -1,999,820 |
| 1965 | 102,176,771 | 103,140,633 | +963,862 |
| 1966 | 130,085,630 | 126,429,520 | -3,656,110 |
| 1967 | 128,602,414 | 133,623,800 | -5,021,386 |
| 1968 | 141,122,338 | 137,063,550 | -4,058,788 |
| 1970 | 175,788,552 | 166,015,858 | -9,772,694 |
| 1971 | 180,856,325 | 162,693,341 | -18,162,984 |
| 1972 | 220,497,113 | 201,321,810 | -19,175,303 |
| 1973 | 318,804,575 | 312,340,224 | -6,464,291 |
| 1974 | 407,001,198 | 397,196,300 | -9,804,898 |
| 1975 | 531,188,978 | 492,112,720 | -38,380,458 |
| 1976 | 795,138,167 | 497,568,369 | -297,567,798 |
| 1977 | 546,034,857 | 473,691,470 | -72,343,387 |
| 1978 | 643,974,115 | 527,867,924 | -116,106,191 |
| 1979 | 868,664,415 | 693,921,009 | -174,743,406 |
| 1981 | 1,255,765,777 | 1,128,724,328 | -127,041,449 |
| 1982 | 1,621,814,000 | 818,136,000 | -803,678,000 |
| 1983 | 1,339,033,000 | 899,546,000 | -439,487,000 |
| 1984 | 1,654,110,000 | 1,247,682,000 | -406,428,000 |
| 1985 | 1,582,380,000 | 1,188,767,000 | -393,613,000 |
| 1986 | 2,858,467,000 | 1,618,125,000 | -1,240,342,000 |
| 1987 | 2,976,517,000 | 2,004,391,000 | -972,126,000 |
| 1988 | 3,528,120,000 | 2,296,587,000 | -1,231,533,000 |
| 1989 | 8,796,129,000 | 7,012,345,000 | -1,783,784,000 |

**Source: Budget Estimates**

**Note: The increase in Expenditures as from 1965.**

**TABLE 2.4 DOMESTIC DEBT, MONEY SUPPLY AND INFLATION FROM 1980 TO 1991**

| YEAR | DOMESTIC DEBT | MONEY SUPPLY | INFLATION |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1980 | 1649.3 | 323.1 | 264 |
| 1981 | 1808.1 | 352.3 | 322 |
| 1982 | 2762.7 | 436.6 | 390 |
| 1983 | 3810.2 | 443.2 | 448 |
| 1984 | 4531.1 | 556.9 | 561 |
| 1985 | 5395.4 | 669,3 | 645 |
| 1986 | 6215.4 | 780.2 | 696 |
| 1987 | 7030.4 | 1140.7 | 896 |
| 1988 | 7377.7 | 1657.3 | 1255 |
| 1989 | 9824.3 | 2392.7 | 1769 |
| 1990 | 9742.0 | 3431.4 | 3616 |
| 1991 | 12272.0 | 5615.1 | - |

**Source: Mirror: Sunday May, 17, 1992:5.**
**Note: All currencies are denoted in Guyana Dollars (G$m)**
**Inflation rates in 1990 are based on partial indexation and 1970 base year.**

Reflecting upon the 1983 budget and the plight of the Guyanese people, Terrence Millington recalled the West Indian poet - George Lamming's remark in 1971 "That the Guyanese are living in a dangerous place at a dangerous time". Millington concluded that

> Rather than the economic collapse itself, the unwillingness of the government to accept any responsibility for it (it blames the weather, the world economy and the workers), or even acknowledge that it exists constitutes the more serious problem. Survival in power is the only creed the party adheres to, and it appears prepared to destroy the country rather than abandon power. (Cited in Spinner: 1984:211)

Faced with the shortage of foreign currency, the budgetary deficits and other economic problems, the Government turned to the IMF for the balance of payment support in 1978. This had been provided since 1979, but the agreements lapsed, owing to Guyana's failure to meet IMF conditions and credits were finally suspended in June 1982. In fact, in May 1985, the IMF formally declared Guyana ineligible for further assistance until outstanding debts to the Fund had been cleared. Therefore, Guyana was unable to conclude another program with the IMF, although the IMF and the World Bank urged the Government to initiate measures on its own to strengthen its balance of payments. These included the removal of price controls, an adjustment of the exchange rate and a greater emphasis on domestic resource mobilization, particularly through a reduction of deficits in the public sector.

By January 1984, the country's economic crisis had become so severe that the Government was forced to devalue the Guyana dollar by 20%, and a further devaluation of 8.9% occurred in October of the same year. Because of the declining nature of the economy since the mid 1970s, the value of the Guyanese dollar fell further as can be seen in Table 2.5.

As can be observed in Table 2.5, the official rate of the Guyana dollar to the US was G$ 2.55 to US$ 1.00 in 1980, but from then, the rate changed drastically reaching a parallel market rate of G$ 125.00 to US$ 1.00 in 1991.

The policy of the State borrowing to finance expenditures created a serious financial constraint. For instance, in

**TABLE 2.5 THE MOVEMENT OF THE OFFICIAL EXCHANGE RATE AND THE PARALLEL MARKET RATE OF THE GUYANESE DOLLAR FROM 1980 TO 1991 IN COMPARISON TO THE USA DOLLAR**

| YEAR | OFFICIAL | PARALLEL |
|---|---|---|
| 1980 | 2.55 | 4.00 |
| 1981 | 3.00 | 6.50 |
| 1982 | 3.00 | 8.00 |
| 1983 | 3.00 | 12.50 |
| 1984 | 4.25 | 14.00 |
| 1985 | 4.15 | 16.50 |
| 1986 | 4.30 | 20.00 |
| 1987 | 10.00 | 28.00 |
| 1988 | 10.00 | 50.00 |
| 1989 | 33.00 | 62.00 |
| 1990 | 45.00 | 98.00 |
| 1991 | 122.00 | 125.00 |

**Source: Mirror: Sunday, April 26. 1992:3**

**Note: Rates in Guyana Dollars.**

1980, debt payments by the State accounted for 37% of current expenditure as compared with 31% for current expenditure on social services and 32% on personal emoluments for employees in all Government departments (Thomas: 1983).

The financial assistance from the external lending agencies in the late 1970s did not ameliorate the "ailing" economy, but led to massive deflationary policies, budgetary cuts in public expenditures, the withdrawal of subsidies on a wide range of consumers items, indirect taxation, large scale retrenchment in the public and private sectors, wage freeze, and other social and economic problems (Thomas: 1983). In fact, the unemployment rate was increasing and it was officially estimated at over 40% of the labour force in 1982.

These measures affected the supply of public services such as public transport, electricity supplies, telephone, health, pure water supply, sanitation, postal services, education, welfare and housing and resulted in a substantial reduction in the standard of living.

## The Sources of Economic Decline

There were a number of external factors which also contributed to the economic decline of the country and these included the deterioration in the terms of trade, and exogenous domestic factors such as poor weather conditions. But, a key contributory factor was the rapid growth of the public sector which resulted in excessive increase in current expenditures unmatched by the corresponding increase in production and in the level of revenues. In addition, there was the inability of the public sector to adequately manage the vast available resources which it had taken over. With the nationalization of the bauxite and sugar industries and the sharp expansion of its role in other sectors of the economy, the State severely overextended its managerial and technical capabilities at the same time that those capabilities were severely eroded by a large outflow of technical manpower which resulted in part from its racially discriminatory employment policies.

The inefficiency of the administration was also due to the fact that job opportunities were used as rewards for political support and this contributed much to the destruction of the productive capacity of the traditionally dominant industries. According to Singh (1988:110), " The nationalized industries were integrated into a patronage system of the PNC in which the senior and high paying jobs were allocated to party loyals". Political criteria rather than managerial expertise determined appointments, promotions and administrative decisions. As a consequence of such political patronage, there was an overtly inflated workforce at all levels in the traditional public service sectors and the nationalized industries. This policy also resulted in the expansion of the bureaucracy.

In addition, the rapid growth in the public sector resulted from the often arbitrary acquisition of resources from the private sector, caused the lack of confidence of the private sector in the economy. Further, the highly centralized nature of decision making in these Government owned enterprises during the Burnham era, also contributed to their deteriorating economic performance.

This deterioration due to political interference and mismanagement in the State-owned enterprises, set a useful background to describe political development in the country since independence and just before.

## Recent Political Developments in Guyana

The social and economic crisis which the West Indies and Guyana faced in the 1930s led to the setting up of the West Indian Royal Commission (also known as the Moyne Commission) mandated to investigate the problems faced by the region. The Commission recommended the democratization of the political systems throughout the Caribbean as a means of stimulating the economy and improve the provision of the social services, including education for the population. One outcome of this in Guyana in 1953, (then British Guiana) was a new constitution, providing for Universal Adult Suffrage. Prior to this period, British Guiana was a classic Crown Colony in which the Constitution provided for a Legislature and an Executive Council made up mostly of nominated Colonial Office Officials and a few elected individuals.

Elections were held under a new constitution in April 1953, and were won by the left-wing People's Progressive Party (PPP) led by Dr. Cheddi Jagan, with Mr. Burnham then a leading member of the PPP, being appointed Minister of Education. However, in October 1953 ( after 133 days in office), the UK Government, claiming that the country was being threatened by a "communist dictatorship" - the PPP - suspended the constitution and appointed an interim Government.

An outcome of this development was that the PPP split into two factions in 1955, and in 1957 the new faction established itself under the leadership of Forbes Burnham. This faction later became the People's National Congress (PNC). The PNC drew its support mainly from Afro-Guyanese, while the PPP support which was previously drawn from all ethnic groups, eventually came largely from Indo-Guyanese.

A revised constitution was introduced in December 1956, and new elections were held in August 1957. The PPP under Dr. Jagan won these elections and he became Chief Minister. Another constitution, providing for internal self-government, was adopted in July 1961, and the PPP won the ensuing elections in August of that year with Dr. Jagan becoming the first Premier in the country. However, internal and external problems developed and these created much local unrest which delayed the country from gaining independence, (see Jagan (1966, 1989), Thomas (1982, 1984), Premdas (1978), Greene (1974), Despres (1975), et al.). For instance, with the support of external forces, mainly from the USA, there were internal disruptions by strikes and riots by the opposition parties. The USA Government exerted pressures on the United Kingdom to try and bring about a change in the constitution and the electoral system - from First Past the Post to Proportional Representation - and the December 1964 elections were held under this new system.

In the 1964 elections, the PPP won the largest number of seats in the Legislative Assembly, but not a 50% majority of the votes which was required for it to form the Government.

This prompted the PNC and United Force (UF - a right-wing party) to form a coalition Government with Burnham as Prime Minister. This new Government led the country to independence on May 26, 1966.

However, this coalition Government was dissolved in 1968 as Peter d'Aguiar (leader of the UF) resigned because of alleged financial malpractice of the PNC faction. New elections were held in 1968 and the PNC claimed to have won a majority and formed the Government. However, there were many well substantiated allegations of electoral malpractice and the latter continued to be the norm by which subsequent elections were conducted. Bemoaning the fraudulent elections in 1973, Chandisingh, the then editor of the Thunder, (the PPP Magazine) but who later defected from the PPP ranks, commented

> The rigging of the electoral role, the padding of the lists, the disenfranchisement of genuine voters, the enfranchisement of fictitious persons, the resurrection of the dead, the giving of ballots to juveniles, etc., are some of the means by which the PNC held on to power. (Cited in Spinner: 1984:189)

Guyana was officially made a "Cooperative Republic" on February 23, 1970. A rigged referendum in July 1978 which was boycotted by the opposition parties, labour unions, some church bodies and other professional and civil groups, gave the National Assembly the power to amend the constitution. The referendum was alleged rigged, due to the fact that, the opposition groups claimed that only between 10 and 15 percent of the electorate participated. However, the PNC established that there was a 71.45 percent turn out and that 97.4 percent of these voted for the "house" - PNC's referendum symbol (Spinner: 1984:160, Singh: 1988:58). As a result of the fraudulent referendum, elections to the National Assembly were postponed for 15 months and the Legislature assumed the role of a Constituent Assembly, in November 1978, to draft a new constitution. In October 1979, elections were postponed a further year and in October 1980, Burnham declared himself Executive President of Guyana, a new constitution was promulgated, and elections were held in December 1980.

For fifteen hours after polls closed on the December 15, 1980 elections, the PNC Government was reported to have been engaged in rigging the votes (Spinner: 1984). The army collected the ballot boxes over the objections of opposition representatives and took them away for "counting" while the opposition agents were not allowed to observe the process. In fact, Lord Avebury (the Secretary of the British Parliamentary Human Rights Group who had monitored elections in Bolivia in 1979), the Chairman of the International Team of Observers to Guyana, commented as follows on the 1980 national elections

> The military presence in certain areas (in Guyana) was intimidating. The (ballot) boxes were collected by military personnel who prevented accredited officials of the opposition, sometimes by force or the threat of force, from accompanying or following the boxes. Military personnel refused accredited representatives of opposition parties access to the count at gunpoint in some cases. (Cited in Spinner: 1984:193).

Regardless of these accusations, the PNC Government announced that 82% of the electorate participated in the 1980 elections and they awarded themselves 312,988 votes or 78% of the poll, and took 41 of the 53 seats in the National Assembly. The PPP was "given" 78,414 votes or 19% of the votes, and 10 seats. The UF was "assigned" 11,612 votes or 3% of the poll and 2 seats (Spinner: 1984:193).

In addition to the military intervention in the 1980 elections, Avebury noted that the Guyana Elections Commission was a "toothless poodle" of the PNC. His overall observation was that, the 1980 elections had not been a free and fair test of the opinion of the Guyanese people, but rather a "clumsily managed and blatant fraud designed to perpetuate the role of President Burnham" (Spinner: 1984:192-193). The military and police which pledged special oaths of loyalty to Burnham and the paramountcy of the PNC party, played a crucial role in the denial of the rights of the Guyanese people to freely participate in the election of their Government.

As previously mentioned, from the time the PNC took office, the Party began to consolidate its power base. This was done largely by strengthening the Repressive State Apparatus (RSA), particularly the military, the People's Militia and the courts. A number of military and para-military agencies were created - all pledging to defend the ruling party. These included the National Service, the People's Militia, the National Guard Service and the armed youth arm of the ruling party - the Young Socialist Movement and Women's Revolutionary Socialist Movement. Further, the party officials of the PNC had their own private "armies". Danns (1978) estimated that by 1977, Guyana had a ratio of 1:35 of the population in one or the other military or paramilitary organization. According to Spinner (1984:102), "the police and the army alone grew in strength from just over 2,000 in 1964 to approximately 30,000 in 1980". What seemed alarming is the fact that "almost 90 percent of the members in the military and paramilitary organizations were Afro-Guyanese" (Spinner: 1984:162). In addition to strengthening the RSA, the State bureaucracies were placed under the control of PNC officials.

In order to extend its power and dominance, the PNC was able to influence members of the opposition parties to join them by making them generous offers such as cabinet posts, e.g. Chandisingh and Teekah. Even religious organizations such as the Sanatan Dharam Maha Sabha (a Hindu religious organization) which was dominated by Indo-Guyanese and traditionally identified with the PPP, was "manipulated by the PNC which eventually secured control of its leaders" (Singh: 1988:94). In fact, the PNC was successful in splitting up the leadership of Hindu and Muslim organizations so that in each case, there was a pro-PNC and pro-PPP fraction. For example, the leadership of Hindu organizations such as the Sanatan Dharam Mahaba Saba and the Pandit Council were pro-PNC, while the Hindu Dharmic Sabha was pro-PPP. In the case of Muslim organizations, the United Sad'r Islamic Anjuman and the Islamic Missionary Guild were pro-PNC, while the Central Islamic Organization was pro-PPP.

Organization such as the Rice Producer's Association (predominantly East Indians) was also displaced by the PNC. For example, the PNC with the support of wealthy Indo-Guyanese rice farmers, organized the Guyana Rice Corporation. The PNC subsequently withdrew its subsidies from the Rice Producers Association, thus helping to reduce its degree of activism. Further, the Rice Marketing Board was replaced by the Guyana Rice Board and members to the Board were appointed by the Government. According to Singh (1984:112) "Party loyalty rather than knowledge of the rice industry is the criterion for appointment". The PNC also sought control of influential non-governmental organizations by influencing the change of their leaders to those who were more acceptable to the Government.

The PNC party was able to succeed in controlling such organization as the Guyana Council of Churches which was quick to denounce any allegations of religious and human rights violations in the country. The members of the House of Israel (a religious sect, the leader of which, David Hill, alias Rabbi Washington, was wanted by the USA Government for criminal offenses) were militant supporters of the Government and repeatedly accused of engaging in acts of thuggery against members of opposition parties or groups (Singh: 1988, Spinner: 1984). The condoning of such outlawed practices by the PNC, resulted in one of the members of the House of Israel stabbing to death in July 1979, Father Dark (a Jesuit Priest) who was "photographing a demonstration in the city of Georgetown" (Singh: 1988:90). The members of this sect were invited to be present at all PNC national events. Their uniform also depicted the colours of the Guyana National Flag.

As previously noted, the PNC appointed its supporters particularly Afro-Guyanese to key positions and the possession of a PNC party card was a prerequisite for such positions. According to Singh (1988:47), "a party card can be very useful in assisting the holder to get a vacancy largely because of the intimidating effect it has over the prospective employer"

The PNC's discriminatory employment policy was reflected in the under-representation of East Indians who comprised 51% of the population and well qualified for administrative and other jobs in the society. In regard to administrative jobs, only 17.4% of the positions of Permanent Secretaries, Principal Assistant Secretaries, Personnel Officers and other Departmental Heads were held by East Indians in 1979. In the public corporations, members of this ethnic group held only about 22% of the senior administrative and management posts (Debiprashad and Budhram: 1987).

This policy of discrimination was also reflected in the Ministry of Education. The Stabroek News of April 1989, commenting on the appointment of "Top" education officials in the Ministry, reported that, the Minister of Education was African and among the senior officers - 1 Chief Education Officer (CEO), 3 Deputy (CEOs), 3 Assistant (CEOs), 10 Heads of Departments and Units within the Ministry - there was not a single Indo-Guyanese. Of the 10 Regional Education Officers, there was 1 Indo-Guyanese. The same ratio existed among District Education Officers, Education Supervisors and School's Welfare Officers.

The newspaper also noted that, less than 30% of the awards to teachers to study at the University of Guyana were granted to Indo-Guyanese. It was further mentioned that, it had been for the longest while since an Indo-Guyanese teacher had been granted a scholarship to study abroad. Of the registered Government of Guyana's scholarship holders/trainees who were expected to graduate in 1988 (locally and overseas), 90 were Afro-Guyanese and 30 were Indo Guyanese (State Planning Secretariat: 1990).

This pattern of discrimination was also seen in the staffing of educational institutions. For example, in 1991, of the 46 teaching staff at the Teacher's Training Colleges, only 6 were Indo-Guyanese. The selection of students to the training colleges was also discriminatory against Indo-Guyanese who were seen as likely PPP supporters. The ratio was 1 Indo to 5 Afro-Guyanese among these teacher trainees. (Informal Interview with a staff at the College). The same pattern was to be found at the university. Even those East Indians who were in senior administrative positions, often had to pledge support for the PNC.

Comparing the promotional and mobility opportunities of Afro and Indo-Guyanese who had similar academic qualifications (i.e. a degree from the University of Guyana) Baksh (1974) noted that, between January 1968 and November 1972, the highest mobility rate was among Afro-Guyanese, 72% of whom experienced between two and four upward movements in their career structure and another 20% experienced one upward movement. In contrast, among East Indians, only 43.4% had experienced one upward career movement while another 41% received two to four as compared with 72% among Afro-Guyanese. The preference of the Government to employ Afro-Guyanese over Indo-Guyanese in key positions was a form of ethnic patronage by the Government to compensate its black supporters, and at the same time, to force its policies and programs on the nation regardless of popular opposition.

One of the policies of the PNC was to establish "paramountcy" of the ruling political Party over the State itself. This policy was enshrined with the creation in 1973 of a new Government department - the Ministry of National Development and Office of the General Secretary of the PNC. As the name suggests, the PNC party office was merged into a department of the State and financed through public funds. The State subsequently proceeded to make it clear that there would be no legal or constitutional change of Government. These various anti-democratic measures denied the will of the electorate and resulted in the suppression of human rights, trade union rights, the rule of law and the traditional "independence" of the judiciary (Thomas: 1983).

According to the Guyana Human Rights Association's report of September 1982, this control was being tightened by the Government and tended to affect all facets of life in Guyana. The report pointed out that

> the more serious violations of political and civil rights are, the most part, directly related to the control of the state by a minority government. It is the extensive control of jobs in the state sector, backed by a disproportionately large military organization (one military person to every thirty-five civilians) which makes that control possible. There is, therefore, little prospect for an improvement in human rights observance until some measure of democratic participation in government becomes possible. (Cited in Spinner: 1984:203)

Although the Government of the USA was for many years supportive of the PNC in the manipulation of the electoral system and assisted the Party to gain power in 1964, its Department of State later began to condemn the Burnham's regime for human rights violations. This was mentioned in the Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1982, where it was noted that Burnham and the PNC

> have imposed a racially oriented, minority government on the nation... through such non-democratic means as

> electoral fraud, access to unaudited public funds, harassment of the opposition, and interference with the judiciary. (Spinner: 1984:204).

The USA Department of State further noted

> The belief that the state security forces have become the private protectors of the ruling party has done more to undermine political activism than any other single factor. Disenchantment, fear, despair and apathy characterize the attitudes of the majority of Guyanese towards politics. The East Indians majority often complained of having no stake in the political life of the nation...
>
> The human rights environment has significantly deteriorated over the years from the tradition once respected in Guyana prior to independence and from what is currently observed in most of the English-speaking Caribbean. It has become increasingly clear , moreover, that traditional concepts of human rights... the integrity of the person and civil and political liberties... are being subordinated to the government's efforts to remain in power. (Cited in Spinner: 1984:204)

Commenting on these reports, Spinner (1984) observed that, the Burnham Government was once again embarrassed when the USA Department of State reported on its poor human rights practices in 1983 which concluded that, since independence in Guyana, the political scene had been marked by fraudulent elections, wholesale migration, frustration of the educated and politically aware middle class, and repression of political opposition. The report further mentioned that the Guyanese security forces employed wire taps, mail interception, and physical surveillance to monitor and intimidate political opponents of the Government (Spinner: 1984). According to the report, arbitrary restraints were also imposed on press freedom and on the right to assemble peacefully. In addition, there was a serious decline in the discipline and standard in the Guyana Police Force and strict loyalty to the PNC was required for advancement in the judiciary, the security forces and the public service.

The power and dominance of the PNC did not mean that all Guyanese succumbed to their wishes. There was some method of resistance or opposition and this took the form of industrial strikes, particularly in the sugar industry. For example, "there were 731 strikes in 1983 of which 704 were in the sugar industry" (Singh: 1988:91). It should be noted that the strikes in sugar industry were called by the Guyana Agriculture Worker's Union (GAWU) - a trade union affiliated to the PPP.

However, to contain and suppress the opposition in their industrial actions, the PNC Government undermined the "right to strike" by introducing a doctrine of "political strike" (Thomas: 1983). This doctrine according to Thomas, claimed that, any strike which the Government did not approve was "political" and therefore had to be treated as a subversive activity, aimed at undermining the State. In such circumstances, the State was justified in using the full weight of its repressive apparatus to break strikes. For instance, in 1977, a strike in the sugar industry (the majority of its employees were Indo-Guyanese) led to a course of action in which the military and paramilitary personnel were brought in to cut sugar cane. Striking workers were physically attacked and a campaign of terrorism was introduced in the sugar belt (Thomas: 1983). Regular workers were replaced by Government supporters (Singh: 1988). Similar actions were later witnessed in the bauxite industry (where the majority of workers were Afro-Guyanese) in 1983, where 1,721 bauxite workers or approximately 29% of the work force was fired by the Government for striking in protest of the Government cutting their five-day work week to a three-day work week (Caribbean Contact: September,1983:7). This type of action was taken particularly to crush their industrial action and show the workers who had the "real" power.

The PNC was also successful in controlling the Trade Union Council by manipulating the composition of the executives of many trade unions in order to determine the final executive composition of the Trade Union Council (TUC). For example, "GAWU with a membership of over 15,000, had 1 delegate for every 442 members, while other small unions such as the Guyana Co-Operative Mortgage Finance Bank Staff Association had 1 delegate to every 13 members" (Singh: 1988:91, Spinner: 1984:171). In other words, "with 32% of the total union membership in the TUC, GAWU only made up 16% of the total votes permitted to be cast at the annual congress of the TUC" (Caribbean Contact: November,1983:6). This meant that small unions "loyal to the PNC were given representation on the Executive Committee out of all proportion to their total membership" (Caribbean Contact: November, 1983:6, Catholic Standard: October 9, 1983). These actions were made possible because the PNC controlled the economy and used its power as the major employer in the country to determine which union was recognized as the bargaining agent for the workers. The PNC's control of the TUC resulted in a split in the executive as six major unions (GAWU, NAACIE, PSU, GMWU, CCWU, UGSA, see Abbreviations) later disassociated themselves from the organization.

This increased repression spread to the invasion of the personal human rights of Guyanese. This attack on human rights was initially manifested in the courts where political efforts were made to bend the judiciary to support the executive arm of the State. For instance, from the Guyana Human Rights Association (GHRA) report of 1980-81, it was observed that

> The courts have been used as an instrument of political harassment on a widespread scale. This has been made possible by the subordination of the judiciary to the political executive in a number of way. (Cited in Thomas: 1983:39).

The report then proceeded to list the following: interference in the appointment of judges, giving them political instructions on specific issues, political interference in specific cases, the issue of blank warrants signed by magistrates and trials which were politically motivated. Incidentally, appeals to the Privy Council - an independent court of appeal in the UK and used by members of the Caribbean states - was abolished in 1970 and replaced by the Guyana Court of Appeal. This meant that no international body could intervene in local trials. This was considered important, especially in political motivated cases.

The repression practised by the PNC was made even more possible by the promulgation of the new constitution in 1980. Undoubtedly the constitution was written to give supreme power to the President as can be seen in the following abstract:

a) Article 182 (1) stated that "the President shall not be personally answerable to any court for the performance of the functions of his office or for any act in the performance of those functions, and no proceedings, whether criminal or civil, shall be instituted against him in his personal capacity in respect thereof either during his term of office or thereafter".

b) In the constitution, the President was made Head of State, Supreme Executive Authority and Commander-in-Chief of the military forces. In addition he was supreme over all the National Assembly, the Local Democratic Organs, the National Congress of Local Democratic Organs and the Supreme Congress of the People. The supremacy was embodied in his powers to summon, suspend or dissolve all these so-called 'democratic' and 'supreme' organs. He also has a veto over the elected National Assembly.

c) The President's power also "requires him to appoint the chairpersons of the Elections Commission, the Public Service Commission, the Police Service Commission, the Judicial Commission and the Teacher's Commission. Furthermore, the President appoints the Army Chief of Staff and all Army Commanders, the Director-General of the National Service and all the Deputy Director Generals, the Commissions of Police and his Deputies, the Attorney-General, the Chancellor of the Judiciary, the Chief of Justice, the Director of Public Prosecutions and literally every other important official of the state". (Thomas: 1983:41-42).

Dr. H. Lutchmon, Professor of Political Science at the University of Guyana and President of the Guyana Human Rights Association, concluded that, the new constitution institutionalized a virtual dictatorship in the country (Spinner: 1984).

## Support for the Ideological State Apparatus

In order to maintain some semblance of legitimacy, the Government sought to combine its growing militarization with increased control of the ideological and propaganda arms of the State. The assumption was that the more successful its propaganda, the less need there will be for the State to resort to physical repression which could increase the chances of armed uprising by the oppressed classes and groups. The PNC therefore, used all the ideological apparatuses of the State, including education in an attempt to secure its legitimacy and paramountcy for its activities. According to Thomas (1983:43) the chief ideological goal was "to identify the leader (Burnham) as embodying the PNC, the PNC as embodying the State and the State being identical with the country as a whole, or with the society at large". All anti-PNC activities were therefore "projected as being anti-state or anti-national and hence subversive" (Thomas: 1983:43).

Some means used by the PNC to put this message across without opposition were: (a) the nationalization of private news media, (b) placing obstacles to the publishing activities of independent or opposition groups by claiming that there was no foreign exchange for the importation of newsprint - although the PNC's "Chronicle" and "New Nation" were amply supplied - and (c) excluding them from using the State controlled organs such as the radio to express their ideas. In fact, the Government in 1979 prevented the "Mirror" from accepting donations of newsprint from the Caribbean Press Broadcasting Association and refused the "Catholic Standard" without any explanation to accept newsprint from the "papal nuncio" in Trinidad and the Canadian Council of Churches (Singh: 1988:89). These examples seemed to suggest that the sole motivation behind the restrictions on newsprint, was political.

To a large extent the national radio station and press functioned as part of the PNC propaganda machinery. According to Thomas (1983:44) "the language used and the style of reporting, give the quickest insights into the degeneracy of the political culture that has accompanied the dictatorship". While the PNC was trying to bolster its own image, the opposition was refused the right to obtain foreign exchange to buy newsprint.

The printing machinery and equipment of trade unions and other opposition groups were frequently seized by the police (Thomas: 1983). Party officials often sued individuals and groups for libel which involved large sums of money, knowing that because of the Government's influence over the legal system, these claims were likely to succeed (Spinner: 1984). This was one means designed to bankrupt the editors and to put news-sheets out of existence. In 1983, for instance, Hamilton Green (then Vice President) was awarded damages in the value of G $20,000 (Spinner: 1984) for a libel suit against Fr. Morrison, the editor of the Catholic Standard.

This control of the media facilitated a "cover-up" of evidence pertaining to the repressive methods used by the PNC Government and gave the public a "one-sided" view of events in the country. Even the discussions in the national parliament were not accurately reported in the media. As the GHRA pointed out in its 1980 Report

> Strict political control is exerted over the content of the Chronicle and the state-owned radio. This is done by directive and personal intervention rather than by a formal censorship arrangement. (Cited in Thomas: 1983:44)

The subservience of the "Chronicle" to the ruling party can be recognized in a memorandum issued by the editor of the paper to the staff on January 16, 1980. The memorandum stated that

> Only the Comrade Prime Minister (Burnham), the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of State for Information will be responsible for the issuing of political directions and this will be done to the General Manager and the Editor only (Cited in Singh: 1988:89).

A further complement of the partisan use of the media, was its attempts by the Government to force the public to participate at PNC events. State employees were virtually compelled to attend PNC party and national events at the risk of being fired or victimized. The task of identifying the "deviants" who did not attend these events was made easy because the senior members of the administrative staff in most of the national institutions were affiliated to the party and were quick to make roll calls at these events.

## Summary

According to Thomas (1983:28), "Socialism" as espoused by the PNC did not demonstrate the "smashing of the colonial state in Guyana". In fact, there was no revolutionary break with the Colonial State structure. What emerged in post-independent Guyana, was "that the post-colonial State began a significant dimensional growth in three main areas, namely, bureaucratization, militarization and ideologization (Thomas: 1983:28).

Under the Burnham regime, the State can be characterized as being coercive since it attempted to use the repressive apparatuses as its chief means of maintaining social order. However, when the Burnham Government initially took power in 1964, it gave the impression that it would maintain democratic and liberal traditions by increasing citizens' participation in decision making at various levels. This was done primarily in order to win the support of the USA and the UK which were anxious to get rid of the previous Government because of its alleged communist leanings. But these efforts were temporary. As support for the PNC continued to wane, it began to depend on rigged elections to retain itself in office. This was achieved by building up its repressive mechanisms such as the military, militia, bureaucracy and the judiciary. It is important to note that, the incumbents in these institutions had to pledge their loyalty to the PNC and Burnham. In addition, it established an Election Commission comprising mainly of its supporters in order to ensure its continuation in power by the skilful manipulation of the voting process.

In the early 1970s, the PNC began to consolidate its power base. Some of the actions taken by the PNC Government including those mentioned previously were: "destroying mass organization to assure its own security which meant concentrated attacks on trade unions and opposition parties, developing parallel institutions or sponsoring private organizations such as trade unions, professional associations and churches, controlling employment opportunities and other resources in the society" (Thomas: 1984:82-84) and the declaration of the paramountcy of the party over the State - to name just a few. As a result of these actions, the nature of the State, the economy and all other institutions in the society underwent dramatic changes ie. most of the institutions became more authoritarian while the economy declined.

The doctrine of party paramountcy provided the avenue for the PNC to use the repressive arm of the State to maintain order. Further, the periodic changes in the constitution made by the Burnham Government, gave the PNC the leeway to acquire from each election more control of the National Assembly and the society. The PNC had over 78% control of the National Assembly. This therefore meant that all pieces of legislation tabled by the PNC in parliament were approved, while those of the opposition were rejected.

These various actions resulted in a legitimacy crisis for the Government which diffused into all facets of life with unprecedented effects on the process of economic development, the quality of life and the social services provided including education.

In trying to bring about economic development and at the same time to establish its legitimacy, the PNC could not have resolved these conflicting pressures, because, in using the State resources to ensure its retention in power, it had further jeopardized its efforts at economic development. For example, the PNC Government increased its security forces which "drew heavily on the surplus appropriated by the state" (Thomas: 1984:91). This obviously generated a conflict between production and "unproductive" expenditures. As indicated earlier, the economy in post independence Guyana showed dramatic decline which was partly due to the State's control of and intervention in the economy by placing incompetent party supporters to manage the nationalized and/or public industries. The expansion of the State into the economy and the accompanying growth of its bureaucracy which resulted from these efforts, provided "the basis for repression, incompetencies and all forms of corrupt practices (bribing, lack of financial and public accountability), elitism, clientelism and nepotism in the society" (Thomas: 1984:90).

The increase in the amount of property taken over by the State was clearly considered necessary for those who controlled the State. This was easily observed even in the so-called cooperative sector, as consumer and producer cooperatives alike, were organized along capitalist lines, with extensive use of wage labour and the growing accumulation of wealth by a few (Thomas (1983), Mandle (1976), Singh (1977). In the State sector, capitalist managerial prerogatives prevailed and workers/control was absent. In the absence of any change in the capital-labour relation, those who controlled the State machinery used their prerogatives to accumulate wealth at the expense of the masses in enterprises which they privately owned.

According to C. Stone (1986), the socialist thrust in Guyana was not matched by accompanying social policies. The aim of the Government was to support the PNC's leadership which was merely using the socialist ideology as a cover up to legitimize state capitalism and self-enrichment by corrupt party leaders and bureaucrats who appropriated the resources of the State for their own private selfish ends.

Commenting on the malpractice of PNC's bureaucrats, the Report by the Integrity Commission in 1987 noted that a "number of public officers seem to think that public funds are for the taking". The report also referred to "a get-rich-syndrome" and "bribery" and "corruption" which reached an endemic proportion. In conclusion, the report noted that

> Guyana needs a new moral vitality. A fresh flow of values must be infused into the life-stream of (the) society, revitalizing its sinews. Indiscipline, inattention, discourtesy, all symptoms of malaise, of inertia, fraud and other corrupt, immoral and dishonest acts - the cumulative effect of all these social ills, which are so manifest in the public sector bodies, seriously hinders progress (Cited in Jagan: 1989:XlV).

The State in Guyana, along with its bureaucratic apparatuses, was therefore being used as the principal instrument to secure the material basis for the extended social/cultural reproduction of the dominant class. As this process developed, "the class/ethnic character of the State became even more discernible, and the State capitalism from which "cooperative socialism" took off, degenerated into openly authoritarian forms of rule" (Thomas: 1983:45).

Because the regime's efforts were directed to sustaining its political power with little popular support, efforts at efficient management of economic activities were neglected in favour of efforts to shore up the "legitimacy" of the

Government. The education system, therefore, became an important instrument by which the PNC Government tried to project a favourable image of itself by trying to build support from among the younger section of the population. It would seem that the regime was channelling more financial and human resources into keeping itself in power rather than providing Guyanese with the appropriate skills, knowledge, attitudes, values and dispositions to improve their productive capacities for capital accumulation. These issues will be developed more in Chapters 4 and 6.

# CHAPTER 3

# REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

## Introduction

Since the focus of this study is on curriculum changes, it was considered necessary to review some of the philosophical and epistemological debates on the nature of knowledge and its organization, especially as this is reflected in the curriculum of schools. These debates have occupied the attention of a wide spectrum of theorists operating under various paradigms such as (a) realism, (b) rationalism, (c) relativism, (c) empiricism, (d) phenomenology and (e) critical theory. In addition, education within the context of third world countries is discussed with a view to demonstrate how education including the curriculum in these countries is patterned after those in the more developed countries. Some of the central theories which offer such contextual understandings are: Structural Functionalism, Human Capital, Conflict and Dependency theory.

Each approach has a value orientation of its own, and therefore, the processing of knowledge in any educational system must be understood in its social and historical context and particularly the economic and power structures. As Bernstein reminds us "How a society selects, classifies, distributes, transmits and evaluates the educational knowledge it considers to be public, reflects both the distribution of power and the principles of social control." (Bernstein: 1977:85).

One of the consequences for curriculum development of such a view is the need to examine existing curricula to see how they reflect the views of the power structures of their societies. It is the assumption that, those in power will attempt to define what is to be taken as knowledge, how accessible to different groups any knowledge would be, what are the acceptable relationships between different knowledge areas and those who have access to them and to what group should such knowledge be made available (Young: 1971).

It is important to note that, although one of the manifest functions of education is the transmission of cognitive knowledge, the unintended consequences of the culture, the values, the attitudes and the ideology that are transmitted by schools should not be underestimated. In short, cognizance should be taken not only of the stated curriculum, but also of the hidden curriculum, as well as, instructional strategies that are used in schools in order to understand the overall effect of curriculum as an instrument of social change. Attention will be paid in this review of the literature on these issues.

The main focus of this chapter is to identify and discuss some of the various theoretical paradigms which have been used to guide curriculum development. Among these discussed in this chapter, it would appear that the "technical-empirical" paradigm was widely used in the curriculum development process in Guyana. This was partly due to the undemocratic nature of the society where a few selected "technical experts" developed the curriculum to achieve the goals of the ruling party.

But before discussing the various paradigms, it is imperative that an operational definition of curriculum be offered, since it provides the framework for understanding the focus of the study.

## Definition of Curriculum

As Stenhouse noted, there are numerous definitions and understandings of curriculum. In writing on this issue, he pointed out that

> We appear to be confronted with two different views of curriculum. On the one hand, the curriculum is seen as an intention, plan or prescription, an idea about what one would like to happen in school. On the other it is seen as the existing state of affairs in schools, what does, in fact happen. (Stenhouse: 1975:2)

In other words, Stenhouse is differentiating between what may be called "curriculum as plan" and "curriculum in use". Lawton sees curriculum as

> that part of the central collection of educational documents which, being basic to education and the teaching-learning process, embodies its objectives;

> outlines the task in hand; defines the focal points of its subject matter, lays down the basic principles for expected attainment; prescribes the fundamentals of methodology; and lists the recommended teaching aids and resources....in addition to being the repository of educational objectives, the curriculum also constitutes a socio-political document and, being the blueprint for the teaching-learning process, a professional charter. (Lawton: 1983:130)

But, whatever definition of curriculum one uses, it is certain that the main concern should be with (1) the intended outcomes of the instructional program - what is planned, provided and selected for the purpose of instruction, and (2) the unplanned outcomes of schooling - the hidden curriculum.

The selection and planning of curriculum content, especially for the primary and secondary schools in Guyana was highly centralized at the Curriculum Development Centre in the Ministry of Education. But, the activities involved in its implementation took place in the classroom and often out of it.

Generally, "curriculum" as used in this study is concerned with the development of cognitive skills and the transmission of certain beliefs, values, attitudes and outlook to the young - in other words cultural transmission or socialization. The first section of the review of the literature deals with the nature of knowledge as it is reflected in the curriculum. To this, attention would now be paid.

## The Nature of Knowledge and Curriculum

### Realism

The "realists" maintain that there is an inherent objective, rational structure of knowledge reflecting the objective reality of the physical world, and the elucidation of this structure is the prime task of realist epistemologists. This generally leads to some form of categorization of knowledge, with the implication that an adequate education must initiate the learner into all the categories to give a complete picture of the structure of reality.

It would appear that the realist epistemology is elitist and utilizes a consensual model of society which tends to de-emphasize conflict over what is "knowledge", thereby devaluing the role of power and control in society in determining what should be taught in schools. Thus, the public body of knowledge is seen as a matter of agreement rather than of dispute, as a "given" rather than as one which is determined by human social action. In short, the common sense knowledge that students bring with them in the classroom (especially the working class), ordinary life situations and the solving of everyday problems are devalued as the bases for curriculum content (Keddie: 1971).

## Rationalism

Like the "realists", the "rationalists" take as their starting point, the supremacy of the intellectual over other human faculties and stress that "true" knowledge is that which is achieved by the mind in some way independently of the information provided by the senses (Kelly: 1986). Such a perspective which conceptualizes knowledge as essentially independent of the observation of our senses, inevitably leads to a view of knowledge as in some sense "God given", "out there" untouched by and owing nothing to the human condition of the beings who possess the knowledge with which they are concerned. This assumption seems to be a feature of traditional societies which is fully encaptured by Wilson who commented

> Knowledge is esoteric, sacred, aristocratic. It is frequently the knowledge of the Gods, revealed to inspire seers, its guardians are priests and literati.... The literati do not transmit new ideas but rather keep pure old dogmas, they are not teachers and disseminators. Their intellectual institutions are closed-segregated seminaries set in remote places, preserving a shrine-like quality of apartness (Cited in Smelser: 1967:265).

In short, the traditional view of knowledge is theoretical, abstract and absolute that is to say, it is unrelated to everyday life.

For Plato and Aristotle, especially the latter, the act of contemplation on the supreme forms of human knowledge is a godlike act, through which an individual transcends his/her human condition and achieves, momentarily, the supreme bliss of the life of pure intellect perpetually enjoyed by God. For Kant, the task of establishing a critique of knowledge is essentially one of discovering those elements of knowledge which owe nothing to our nature as human beings, those which are derived from pure reason and have nothing to do with human feelings or passions (Kelly: 1977).

## Relativism

Unlike the "realists" and "rationalists", "relativists" perceive knowledge as a picture of "reality" which serves particular social and political interest - generally those of the dominant power group - and they reject the possibility of categorizing knowledge into inherent, logical structures. What is important for the relativists, is to understand whose interests a particular view of knowledge serves. Such a position denies the existence of divisions in knowledge based on any inherent logical structure and insists that such divisions are the acts of "man" in support of various structures and institutions in society. For instance, in Plato's "ideal society" knowledge is hierarchically arranged so as to condition the people to accept and obey without question the Philosopher Kings (the possessors of abstract knowledge). Plato's belief in a stratified society inordinately leads to members of each class/stratum receiving an education corresponding to their future occupational destination. As such, their occupational and social destinations determine the kind of education they would need to acquire.

Similarly, Marx, though he did not write elaborately on education, stated that, there is a relationship between those who own and control the means of economic production (material substructure) and the kind of political/ideological/knowledge (superstructure) which is passed on by the society. Marx saw the unequal access to the control of the economic means of production as related to the unequal distribution of knowledge. In the "German Ideology" he declared

> the class which is the ruling material force of a society, is at the same time its ruling intellectual force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production...hence among other things (they) rule also as thinkers, as producers of ideas, and regulate the production and distribution of ideas of their age.... (Cited in K. Harris: 1979:73)

Implicit in this quotation, is the division between mental and manual labour with the ruling class contributing to the former, while the working class contributing to the latter.

When one looks at specific areas of knowledge and their propagation through education, it can be observed that the ruling groups exert an important influence on what subjects should be taught in schools. The ruling groups also determine the content of the knowledge that should pass as history, geography, philosophy etc. in any particular epoch. They also influence what is considered important in mathematics and the sciences. In other words, it can be said that, what is learned in schools, is largely determined by the ruling groups. Children do not simply learn Math, English, History etc., but according to Harris (1979), they learn what certain ruling interest groups take as Math, English and History and they accept as correct and worth knowing what those same interest groups count as correct and worth knowing. Therefore, the ruling groups extend influence on all forms of public knowledge, not only those that enter the school's curriculum. Thus, it would not include as knowledge anything that would seriously work against their vested interests.

Harris (1979) argues that education is essentially concerned with the transmission of knowledge, but given the fact that education is ideological, its major concern seems to be the transmission of knowledge that influences people's view of the world. Those in power within the educational systems as represented by the intelligentsia, school boards, school principals and makers of curriculum, decide what knowledge goes into the curriculum and what stays out. In making these decisions, they also determine the areas about which people should be kept ignorant. It would not be surprising, therefore, to find little or nothing in the curriculum that would allow or assist people to discover the real nature of relations in society or the underlying aspects of the social structure. Content that is excluded from the curriculum becomes branded as inferior, less important and not worth knowing or subversive. Further, publishers tend to put out school books and other reading materials which are recommended in courses or demanded by libraries and bookshops. Thus, education through the curriculum which is provided for schools includes a much more pervasive notion of what knowledge is of most worth, than appears on the surface. It therefore emerges as a powerful agent of political manipulation (Harris: 1979).

## Empiricism

Unlike the "realists" and "rationalists", "empiricists" maintain that knowledge of the world about us can only be derived from the evidence that the world offers us through the use of our senses (Kelly: 1986). Empiricism therefore, can be viewed as a reaction to the mysticism of rationalism. The fundamental tenet of empiricism is well expressed in the claim of John Locke (the founder of the empiricist movement) that, no knowledge comes to the mind except through the gates of the senses. Such knowledge is acquired through sensation and reflection, that is, what the senses tell us. David Hume, an ardent exponent of the empiricist view, also concluded that no knowledge is possible unless we have some certainty about our knowledge of the world about us.

Empiricism in the twentieth century has been the guiding paradigm in the field of curriculum thinking. From the time of Bobbitt "How to make a Curriculum" to Ralph Tyler's formulation in 1949 of the Curriculum Rationale (Purpose, Learning Experiences, Organization of Learning Experiences and Evaluation), curriculum writings have been abundant and have tended to emphasize the empirical/technical-analytical or scientific approach to curriculum development. The bulk of the literature has been devoted to the elaboration of the ends-means relationship in curriculum theories through the use of increasingly sophisticated but reified language of systems theory, games theory, decision theory, behaviour modification, systematic engineering and the like (Aoki: 1978).

However in the 1970s and 1980s, there has been an upswing in the focus of curriculum orientation. It would appear that this has been instigated as a reaction to Bruner's call for a moratorium in curriculum theory, Schwab's pronouncement of the moribund state of curriculum inquiry and Magoon bemoaning the crisis in educational research. But before discussing the new approaches as articulated by the phenomelogical and critical paradigms, a brief account of empiricism would be attempted.

Emerging out of empiricism and incorporating Habermas's knowledge interest, is the empirical-analytical paradigm which seeks explanatory and technical knowledge. The research mode is in the tradition of the sciences and thus, the scientific experiment is the exemplary research paradigm. This paradigm seems to be the dominant mode of knowledge acquisition in the field of curriculum. According to Habermas (1972), the basic human activity of those engaged in empirical-analytic research or its utilitarian derivatives (applied sciences), is intellectual or technical work. Seen as a productive process therefore, intellectual or technical work has as its basic intent a cognitive interest in the control of objects in the world. By acting upon the objectified world, man can transform it and in the process generate empirical analytic and technical understandings which will enhance efficiency, certainty and predictability. Thus, the form of knowledge sought is nomological and law-like that gives explanatory power.

According to this orientation, intellectual control of the world is approached indirectly, mediated by conceptual constructs and knowledge of the world is gained through guided observation and carefully designed and controlled manipulation. Hence, the researcher or curriculum specialist approaches his/her world "objectively", distancing his/her own subjectivity from the objectified world or having a detached stance towards his/her world. Validation of knowledge gained in this orientation proceeds through corroborative empirical evidence found within the objective world.

Knowledge in the technical model is treated primarily as a realm of objective 'facts'. That is, knowledge is external to the individual and is imposed on him/her as something external. In addition, knowledge is divorced from human meanings and intersubjective exchange (Giroux: 1981). It is no longer seen as something to be questioned, analyzed and negotiated. Instead, it becomes something to be managed and mastered. In this case, knowledge is removed from the self-formative process of generating one's own set of meanings - a process that involves an interpretative relationship between knower and known. Once the subjective dimension of knowledge is lost, the purpose of knowledge becomes one of accumulation and categorization.

Within the framework of curriculum development, this orientation is most advantageous to national curriculum projects which are initiated by "experts" (usually in disciplined areas) who begin by preparing materials to be tried out, fed back to the experts, rewritten and piloted and then revised for broad distribution. In other words, the model stresses "mission specificity", time on task variables and feedback to make adjustments. The central features of this orientation are expert domination of the process of curriculum development and the attempt to maximize control by aiming all feedback procedures at gaining the greatest possible amount of student's achievement and teacher's satisfaction. Thus, the whole process is controlled and monitored with specific goals in mind, and it is the experts who make the initial and final decisions about the validity of the content and process. This orientation finds its logical fruition in the behavioral objectives movement as propagated by Bloom and Krathwohl, Gagne et al.

It can be observed in this paradigm that, students are not the creators of knowledge, but are operating within a model that predefines the process of knowledge acquisition. In short, control, not learning how to learn, appears to have a high priority in this model. This is the dominant model which guided curriculum development in Guyana.

The empirical-analytic model is not geared towards producing an understanding of phenomena with particular social, cultural or economic setting, neither does it provide a sound basis for developing the type of competencies that will allow the individual to grapple with problems within particular social contexts i.e. problems which require an understanding of the motivations and concerns of the various groups of human actors involved (Bacchus: 1992).

The knowledge produced by this approach is ideally suited for the maintenance of a relationship dominated by the expert who decides the kind of policies which should be implemented. In other words, it provides an excellent basis of control by technically competent individuals whose loyalties are usually with the dominant groups in the society. The recipients of educational policies are therefore expected to acquiesce to the fact that, their lives are in the hands of experts. In short, it supports a passive view of students and appears incapable of examining the ideological presuppositions that tie it to the narrow operational mode or reasoning. Instead of promoting critical refection on human understanding, it emphasizes the logic of probability as the ultimate definition of truth and meaning.

## Phenomenological/Situational Interpretive Inquiry Orientation

This orientation underlies the situational/contextual milieu wherein things, people and events interact together and meanings are derived by people in a given situation. In other words, people are continuously interpreting the events that they experience. Unlike the empirical-analytic orientation, whereby, most of human activity is directed to man's productive intellectual and technical capacity to work, the major area of concern in the phenomelogical framework is communication among humans. Since, the key focus of this orientation is insights into human experiences as they are lived, one needs to direct efforts towards clarifying, authenticating and bringing to the full human awareness of the meaning structures, and of the constructive forces of the socio-cultural process. It is important to note that, the knowledge sought is not nomological law-like statements, but deep structures of meanings, i.e. the way in which individuals meaningfully experience and cognitively appreciate the social world (Aoki: 1978). Thus, the world is known contextually or situationally by the sharing of common meanings and language in a face-to-face situation which provides explanations of an interpretative kind.

While it is claimed that in the empirical-analytic model, man and world are given second-order construction through the medium of conceptual constructs, in the situational world, man and social world are seen as related dialectically. The researcher cannot stand aloof as an observer which is often the norm in the empirical-analytic model, but must enter into intersubjective dialogue with the people in the research situation - a very important issue for curriculum developers.

Teachers who spend most of their time in classrooms, are more knowledgeable and in a better position to understand them, than the empirical researcher who has amassed general knowledge of classrooms, by spending a few hours gathering data. Thus, generalizations about classroom life made by the empirical researcher are quite different from what it is, since it may provide a distorted, impoverished and lifeless portrayal of classroom reality.

It would seem that this orientation tends to emphasize practical interest i.e. an interest in increasing human understanding, and giving a deeper insight into particular social phenomenon to inform human actors and actions within cultural settings. It therefore, provides interests for those whose major concern lies in the study of curriculum in use, curriculum development with a certain situational context and evaluation within the situation (Aoki: 1978). According to Schwab (1973), if one wants to decide and act with greater understanding in a particular curriculum situation, then one should develop insights by interacting with the situation consisting of the teacher, learner, subject matter and milieu.

The orientation might be linked to what used to be called the "grass roots" curriculum. Essentially, it seeks to engage the local staff of schools in the clarifications and specifications of aspects of the curriculum. Considerable faith is placed on the use of group process and it is the conviction that, unless teachers, as well as students, are centrally involved in the process of curriculum development, texts, documents and materials will be misused or become relatively meaningless. Despite some rhetoric of control in this process, it appears that consensus and communication are its more important outcomes. Thus, students, staff and community participate and "knowing" appears central.

It would seem that the community school-based curriculum development activities are a direct outcome of this basic interest. One can assume that, the orientation has more flexibility in creating a body of knowledge out of common experiences and the social milieu and defining what knowledge is acceptable to be incorporated in the curriculum.

## Critically Reflective Inquiry Orientation

The foremost activity of critical theory is reflection. In reflection, the actor through the process of critical analysis, uncovers and makes explicit the tacit and hidden assumptions and intentions which are held. In the process of probing to reveal covert intentions and assumptions, it makes the unconscious conscious. It is significant to note that, the objective is not simply to increase comprehension of a phenomenon, but also to sharpen the awareness of individuals of the relationship of dominance and submission that underlie it.

Like the phenomenological paradigm, in critical inquiry, the researcher becomes a part of the object of inquiry. The researcher in becoming involved with the subjects, enters into their world and engages them in mutually reflective activity (Aoki: 1978). Reflection by himself and with the participants is an ongoing dialogical process which is dialectical and transformative. Because of this, it can assist individuals to increase and transform their consciousness about social phenomena and where necessary make them better able to transform their own reality. Educational research must therefore be structured pedagogically. It should be grounded reflectively in the emancipatory means towards which all progressive education is oriented (Van Manen: 1978).

However, this approach has been neglected very much in curriculum or educational programmes especially in Guyana, as educators have tended to become more technicist in educational orientation. Curriculum specialists need to understand that focus should be placed not only on the knowledge structure of life experiences, but also on the normative structure as well.

This orientation might be called the dialogical model in the sense that it is out of a dialogical process that curriculum can emerge. Paulo Freire can be regarded as the progenitor of the model in developing literacy programmes for Brazilian peasants. His aim was to raise the consciousness of the peasants and thus let them emancipate themselves from domination. Within the Freirian pedagogical approach, students are not considered to be the repository of knowledge or empty vessels to be filled, but active individuals who should collaborate with teachers in constructing their knowledge within a dialogical relationship.

Participation of both students and adults is necessary in the interest of emancipation, as cultural resources of the adults can be matched to the needs and interest of the students. For instance, general curriculum themes or topics can be prepared by adult leaders who will engage students in dialogue, and by their own critical reflection on the material presented, they would be able to validate and verify the material.

Generally, this approach to curriculum development seems to be eclectic, in the sense that, it focuses on interdisciplinary activities and draws upon the reflective disciplines such as the sociology of knowledge, literacy criticism, critical social theory, psychoanalysis and phenomenological pedagogy. This broad perspective enriches the field of curriculum. Therefore, educators should be advised to take a closer look at these disciplines for what they can offer in providing a research perspective to gather the kind of knowledge oriented towards human and social transformation and change.

For curriculum developers in Guyana to be more effective in their work, they need to be guided by the technical, practical and emancipatory knowledge interests. However, they have tended to focus their attention on the utilization of the empirical-analytic paradigm and not on the phenomenological and emancipatory paradigms. The two latter paradigms certainly undermined the dominance and control which the ruling party had over the population.

According to Bacchus (1989), one of the crucial weaknesses of the present approach in education, especially in the developing countries, including Guyana, is a virtual neglect or a lack of interest in critical emancipatory knowledge as a means of helping students to increase their social sensitivity and understanding of their major problems which will give them the feeling and confidence that they can do something about them.

Curriculum specialists who realize the importance of emancipatory interests in their instructional programmes might begin to see the need to construct a whole new agenda or an agenda with new priorities in their work. Such concern was a feature in the works of Dewey and others in the progressive education movement, and also caught the attention of contemporary critical writers such as Freire (1985), Schubert (1986), Aoki (1978), Kemmis (1986), Giroux (981), Apple (1978), Pinar (1981), MacDonald (1987), Greene (1982), Willis (1977), Harris (1979) and others. All of them seem to be preoccupied with the notion of a radical pedagogy.

As the importance of critical emancipatory knowledge appears to be gaining acceptance, educators tend to be in a better position to ask questions such as "How can the sensitivity or consciousness of students to the political and other constraining factors which adversely affect their ability to improve the quality of their own lives, be increased? On a broader perspective, educators would also become concerned with issues such as "How can education be effective in preparing students, not simply to fill the existing hierarchical occupational niche, but to transform their own societies, and laying the background towards improving the standard of living of the population as a whole and not only for the more privileged sections? (Bacchus: 1989).

While these are crucial issues which face education and society as a whole, it would appear that, interest in emancipatory possibilities of education in Guyana, with its authoritarian political system, is ignored, giving rise to technical issues such as, increasing efficiency in assessing the academic performance of students in various subject areas and also in reproducing the social and cultural relations in the society. In other words, the vision of emancipatory possibilities is undermined by selected "technical experts" who are mandated with a political agenda which shows no concern and compassion to improve the life of the poor and disadvantaged. A discussion on other paradigms which influence education and curriculum development in developing countries, including Guyana, will now be attempted.

## Education and Curriculum Development in the Third World Context

Almost all less development countries (ldcs) have experienced some form of colonialism at one time or the other. As a result of their colonial domination, their educational systems and the curriculum offered in their schools have largely emerged from their metropolitan connection and were essentially part of the institutional infrastructure of the colonizing states which maintained hegemony, dominance and social control over their colonies. Memmi (1965), Carnoy (1974), Bacchus (1989), Rodney (1974), Altbach and Kelly (1978), Williams (1951,1970), Fanon (1967) et al. have commented on the ill effects and unsuitability of colonial education as manifested in the curriculum to the socio-cultural, political and economic milieu of the ldcs.

However, since schooling is also seen as an indispensable institution in the ldcs, attempts needed to have been made, especially after their independence to improve the effectiveness of their educational systems, so as to provide students with the requisite values, attitudes, depositions, knowledge, skills etc, which might help them to improve their quality of life in their own societies. The challenge therefore, is for educators to re-examine the nature of the educational experiences which schools in the ldcs provide through the curriculum that is offered to see how far the curriculum might be reorganized to enhance the personal, social and economic well being of the students, especially the poor and deprived and at the same time equip them to contribute even more to the socio-economic development of their societies. Despite the importance of these goals, the new educational programs in Guyana as will be seen later, were designed mainly to maintain the dominant and submissive relationships that were characteristic of the colonial era. As a result, their impact on the socio-economic development in the society was minimal.

There appears to be two contrasting views which affect the thinking of curriculum specialists in the more developed countries (mdcs) as well as the ldcs. The first emerges from the Structural Functional Model which actually permeated curriculum planning up the late 1960s. In this view, schools attempt to pass on knowledge, skills and attitudes which are recognized by "common agreement" as being most worth to society. Those who share this view of curriculum planning, tend to see curriculum developers as trying to select the "right kind of experiences" to give to the students i.e. those experiences which will help them to cope with the present and changing realities (Hurn: 1985). This view of curriculum development arises from a consensus model of society and stresses continuity and coordination in the process. This assumption has been advocated by the "essentialists" who argued that curriculum should include certain basic knowledge which has been accumulated by mankind over the years. Such knowledge is not only necessary for the maintenance and continuity of the society, but also helps to prepare individuals for their future occupational roles i.e. the knowledge and skills passed on to students would better equip them for the occupational roles in the modern labour market.

The theory also posits that the modern society is an expert society, one that depends primarily on rational knowledge for economic growth, requiring more highly trained individuals to fill the majority of occupational roles (Hurn: 1985). According to this paradigm, educational institutions should perform two crucial functions - (1) create new knowledge i.e. through research activities in universities and colleges that will enhance economic growth and social progress and (2) equip students with specialized knowledge within formal educational institutions which prepare them for an increasingly skilled differentiated labour market (Hurn: 1985:33). This major concern for equipping students with the requisite knowledge, skills and dispositions for employment has always been evident, but greater importance was attached to it in many developing countries with the emergence of the human capital theory, as a variant of structural functionalism, in the 1950s and 1960s.

## Human Capital Theory

The Human Capital Theory as posited by Schultz (1961), Denison (1962), Becker (1964), Harbison and Myers (1964), and Psachoropolus (1970), assumes that investment in human capital through formal education would produce the knowledge and skills which would pay off in the future in the form of increased earnings and labour productivity at both the private (individual) and national levels. The view of the HC theorists was highlighted by Schultz in his Presidential Address in 1960 to the American Economic Association on the theme "Investment in Human Capital." At that time, it fitted in well with the prevailing social and political climate. For instance, for the businessmen, there was the attractive appeal of education as investment, for university teachers and researchers, there was an apparently scientific justification for the expansion of their activity, for some politicians, there was the support for increasing access to education and for the consumers of education, there was the prospect of widening opportunities for well-paid jobs, better standard of living, equality of opportunities and increases in incomes (Karabel and Halsey: 1977).

Schultz (1961) concluded that ldcs which lacked the knowledge and skills required to take on and use efficiently superior techniques of production should be provided with aid designed to improve the quality of their human capital. This prompted organizations such as World Bank, IMF, the Ford Foundations to respond to Schultz's appeal by providing funds for economists of education to spread the gospel of human capital among the nations of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

The theory suggests that nations of the ldcs were poor not because of the structure of international relations (a view advocated by the Dependency theorists), but because of their internal characteristics - most notable their lack of human capital. As with the poor in the advanced countries, nothing in the situation of the ldcs called for radical or structural change, development was possible if only they would improve the quality of their inadequate human resources (Karabel & Halsey: 1977). Attention was therefore deflected from structural variables on to individuals and particularly to the nature of the education with which they were provided.

Application of this theoretical framework however, led to diverse and often unsuccessful results. For instance, a study of Ghana by Foster (1965) shows that, active sponsorship of technical and vocational education as part of the drive to improve the quality of human capital evoked little popular response. This was largely because the populace, apparently more aware of the actual structure of the job opportunities in Ghana than foreign economists, recognized that the exchange sector was simply too small to absorb very many technical/vocational graduates (Karabel and Halsey: 1977). Foster also pointed out that, the income levels of the jobs, the foundations of which were laid in the period of colonialism, were such that they provided less attraction for students to follow a technical and vocational curriculum. The type of curriculum that was therefore more attractive to the students, was that which promised them higher incomes - not necessarily that which provided them with relevant and productive skills for their local economy.

In many ldcs, it is very difficult to verify the assumption that, the higher earnings of more educated individuals is a reflection of their higher productivity. This is partly due to the relatively large size of the public sector in which the level of wages paid are more influenced by political rather than productivity considerations. Because of its size, public sector wages strongly influence the level of wages in the private sector in many ldcs. In addition, there is no conclusive evidence about what specific types of knowledge are likely to increase the productivity of most workers, especially those working in the traditional sector of the ldcs. This, therefore, casts doubts about the specific kinds of formal knowledge which are required to increase productivity, especially in the many types of job done by the masses in the ldcs.

The focus on individual characteristics in ensuring economic growth also de-emphasizes reference to the social structural features which might more strongly militate against increased production, as demonstrated in Guyana. Further, it completely neglects the nature of international ties between countries and assumes that differences between the rich and poor countries rest in characteristics within the countries themselves (Fagerlind and Saha: 1983).

## The Conflict Model

The contrasting view of curriculum development seems to be an offshoot of the conflict model which draws attention to the interplay between curricular knowledge and authority, in which curriculum decisions do not simply arise out of consensus among the different groups in society. Instead, it suggests that, it is usually those with power who succeed in defining what is taken as knowledge and what are the acceptable relationships between different knowledge areas.

Obviously, this knowledge serves their interests rather than the interests of the less privileged.

The Weberian perspective of conflict emphasizes the power of dominant groups to shape the institutions of societies e.g. schools, arbitrarily to their own purpose. Since group interests are at stake in the determination of the ideals that govern a school system, the process of imposing a given definition of knowledge is inherently one of potential conflict (Karabel and Halsey: 1977). Similarly, Archer and Vaughan (1971) comment on the domination and assertion of various groups within the society to control the educational system and what should be taught in schools.

Collins (1979) also alludes to the fact that, education serves to reinforce status cultures by identifying "insiders" and posing barriers to "outsiders". The centre of this status-based conflict over education lies in the labour market where organizations and employers use educational requirements to allocate people to jobs with varying rewards. Seen in this light, struggles over educational requirements are often in the end, conflicts between superordinate groups trying to monopolize position of privilege and subordinate groups trying to gain access to them. As superior status groups raise educational requirements higher so as to reinforce their privileged position, groups of lower status demand access to more education. This ensures educational spiral or what Dore calls the diploma disease. Collins' theory of educational stratification directs him to examine the "black box" of schooling, whereby, schools do not only transmit technical skills, but status cultures (Karabel & Halsey: 1977). In short, the educational system is a crucial agent in the differential socialization of school children by status groups of origin.

According to the Neo-Marxists (proponents of the conflict model), schools have served and continue to serve as "channelling colonies" (Hurn: 1985). That is, channelling the poor into careers appropriate to their abilities and socio-economic status. In addition, the neo-Marxists reject the notion that schools provide cognitive skills essential to the performance of the increasingly complex jobs in modern societies. Instead, they argue that schools have taught and continue to teach future workers of the capitalist and dependent capitalist societies to be docile and compliant and to produce workers who can accept the industrial discipline of the work place. In other words, the schools are mechanisms for the social reproduction of capitalist division of labour

It is further argued by the neo-Marxists, that pre-vocational education is a deliberate attempt to prepare the future workers for the lower level menial jobs which is obviously important to profit oriented industrialists. This they contend, is portrayed in the values taught in the schools which are geared to meet the needs of the elites. They also posit that education is a "smoke screen" behind which schools work to perpetuate inequality and convince the poor that their failure is their own fault (Hurn: 1985) rather then blaming the unequal structures in the society.

## Dependency Perspective

Since the curricula offered in most ldcs are generally patterned after those in the mdcs, an exposition of the dependency theory, as it applies to education in the ldcs, will throw some light on the influence on the metropolitan forces on the curriculum offered in most ldcs.

Prior to European colonization, the traditional education of most ldcs was largely non-formal, directed mainly at developing in the young the skills, knowledge, attitudes and values which were necessary for the economic survival and social cohesion of the various groups in these societies. The major function of education was to ensure social stability and to prepare the young to grapple with those realities of life which they were going to face in their transition to adulthood. For instance, the mastering of archery, hunting, fishing and swimming skills, wielding the club with dexterity and strength and building of huts/cottages were skills necessary for economic survival.

Education which was usually informal in nature, was therefore largely directed at serving the internal needs of these societies. But, with the arrival of the Europeans and the setting up of the colonial State, education performed its dual role of (a) trying to foster capital accumulation and (b) establishing legitimacy (Torres, Pannu, Bacchus: 1993). The former was achieved by gearing the educational system towards meeting the labour market needs for suitable manpower, while the latter was deemed less important because of the initial military presence of the colonizers in their colonies. Later, social order was increasingly regulated through the use of the local physical control mechanism of the State (particularly the police, the courts, the prisons etc.).

The basic technical skills which the colonized needed to perform their economic roles were passed on in schools, including the language of the colonizer to ensure basic communication between the workers and employers. Education was therefore practical, though political socialization through education became increasingly important to legitimize the State which had no democratic support from the population. This was achieved by the songs and poems the students had to learn, the history and geography they studied, the text books which they used and the festivities which the schools celebrated. All of these contributed towards developing in the students a sense of loyalty to the colonizer (Bacchus: 1989, Memmi: 1965, Carnoy: 1974, Rodney: 1974). In other words, the purpose of education which was to initiate a child into the culture of his/her society became distorted, since it was the values of a foreign culture which began to be taught, while the native traditions were derided or ignored. It psychologically separated people from their own environment, taught them dependence and destroyed their self-worth.

With the consolidation of colonialism, there was the need for some local individuals to have education beyond mere literacy and numeracy to fill some of the lower and middle level positions in the occupational hierarchy. This necessitated a kind of education which made these individuals different from the masses. The primary aim, was to make them more familiar with the culture and the ways of thinking as the colonizer. The curriculum experiences offered to the few individuals were expected to make them better prepared to maintain the status quo and to carry out their roles as mediators between the colonizers and the masses. In other words, the colonizers were creating a "cadre of locals" who would eventually assume positions of power after the colonizers had departed, and would ensure that the infrastructure of colonialism was perpetuated. For instance, in most British colonies, the university colleges which were established in the post 1945 period were initially part of a metropolitan university. This was an attempt to ensure that the educational programs offered by local institutions were replicas of those of the metropole.

Post-independence period was accompanied by a number of new developments in the educational programs in the ldcs. However, the economic policies pursued were geared towards sustaining and extending the colonial infrastructural complex which was originally developed in these societies and which continued to enhance the economic interests of the metropolis. As such, major curriculum changes which took place since independence, followed along the same pattern and tended to face similar problems as those which were introduced in the colonial days.

One can argue that the educational experiences of the ldcs have provided strong evidence to support the social and cultural reproduction theory of education which asserts that in these countries, education has largely helped to consolidate the power of the ruling elites as it did under colonial rule. The new political elites were not too anxious to share the power, privilege and authority. As Bacchus observed

> A marked feature of these recently independent countries is that opportunities for upward social mobility have been declining in the post independence period and the new local elite who, largely on their account of their education, enjoyed relatively prestigious positions have developed vested interests in the existing social structures and are not too very keen on democratizing these further (Bacchus: 1975:4).

Similarly, Kathleen Drayton remarked that

> decisions at every level are taken for the people, seldom with them. The function of the people is therefore to be docile and carry out orders (Caribbean Contact: Nov. 1976:10).

Therefore, in addition to consolidating the position of the ruling elites, education in ldcs is used to maintain the dependent relationship between the mdcs and ldcs. The latter was clearly witnessed by the language of instruction used in schools (i.e. a European language), history-teaching which focused on the heroes of the colonizers, and learning the geography of the "mother country".

Since the creation and the dissemination of official knowledge in the ldcs is minimal due to the lack of personnel and financial support, the ldcs suffer from an "unfortunate balance of intellectual payment" (Altbach: 1978:23). The ldcs import many more knowledge products than they export. They also depend on the mdcs for books and journals and also for knowledge in most scientific and technical fields, for applied research findings and very often, knowledge and information of the ldcs themselves. The knowledge and information are generally channelled through the industrialized nations and therefore filtered through their publishing houses, journals, and academic institutions, before reaching audiences of the ldcs.

According to Altbach (1978), the industrialized nations are the metropolitan centres, providing or determining the activities of the key elements of intellectual life, such as universities, publishing houses, research institutes, etc. It is not surprising therefore, that most ldcs are in a sense "provinces of the mdcs" as a result of inequality of resources and the influence of tradition.

The peripheral status of the ldcs put them at a disadvantage in terms of the creation and distribution of knowledge. To reiterate the point, the ldcs continue to find themselves in a classic position of dependency vis-a-vis the mdcs. Such dependency shows little respect for the indigenous belief systems, linguistic heritage, modes of entertainment or aesthetic experiences. This knowledge transmitted to students from the mdcs was not necessarily relevant to the needs of the masses in the ldcs. As Rodney, commenting on education in Africa noted

> the main purpose of the colonial school system was to train Africans to help man the local administration at the lowest ranks and to staff the private capitalist firms owned by Europeans. In effect that meant selecting a few Africans to participate in the domination and exploration of the continent as a whole. It was not an educational system that grew out of the African environment or one that was designed to promote the most rational use of material and social resources. It was not an educational system designed to give young people confidence and pride as members of African societies, but one which sought to instill a sense of deference towards all that was European and capitalist.... (Rodney: 1978:240-241)

According to him, colonial schooling provided education for subordination, exploitation, the creation of mental confusion and the development of underdevelopment.

It was hoped, especially after independence, that schooling in ex-colonial societies would have developed instructional materials much more oriented towards national culture and national development. However, schools in the ldcs have continued to be influenced by the European or the USA model of education, using a curriculum largely drawn from their former metropolitan countries. Despite the changing of some basic text books and the emergence of a national culture after independence, it has been observed that this national culture is usually based largely on its interpretation by the national bourgeoisie, and the school system still remains available primarily to those who had come into close contact with European or North American values and norms (Carnoy: 1974). This process has continued after independence and according to Memmi (1965) will remain so as long as the local hierarchy is hooked into the hierarchy that extends to the metropolitan centre.

As a result, the schools in the ldcs still produce docile dependent people, so lacking in self confidence that they are afraid to make decisions or to challenge decision makers as indicated above by Drayton. One can therefore assume that educational changes and curriculum reforms in these societies are not likely to be effective if they are not accompanied by basic changes in the economic and social structure inherited from colonialism.

Further, the role of education in helping to transform the ldcs can only be achieved if the educators in these countries are willing to search for knowledge forms which would enable them to rethink the kinds of topics, issues, and approaches to be incorporated in the curriculum.

In this study, the researcher selectively draws on some of the literature reviewed in this chapter, particularly those which help the analysis to focus on (a) the relationship between knowledge and power in society and (b) that the view of knowledge is more dynamic than that which is dependent on empiricism.

# CHAPTER 4

# EDUCATION, CURRICULUM CHANGE AND THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE IN GUYANA

## Introduction

Since schools are sites where knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and dispositions are inculcated in students to fit them for life in their society, it is not surprising that the ruling group or political leaders attempt to use them to transmit those world views which are consistent with the type of society they want to create. This usually means the kind of society which will support and protect their own interests. Schooling in Guyana during the period of the study, as would be observed later, also played an important role in legitimizing the social relations and the form of Government in the society.

Before examining educational and curriculum changes in post-independence Guyana, a brief historical review will be made of education in the colonial period.

## Education in Colonial Guyana

Education in the colonial Guyanese society generally catered to the needs of planters and the colonial authorities. Moreover, the training provided by the educational institutions was part and parcel of the colonial apparatus, designed to cultivate dedicated and efficient managers of the colonial system (Williams: 1970).

In the pre-emancipation period, no formal education was provided for the slave population in Guyana, because it was feared that this would increase their discontentment and caused them to rebel against their masters. Therefore, whatever "education" was offered to the slaves was of the non-formal type, aimed at increasing their productive capacity. Further, the knowledge and skills acquired were to orient them to accept their subservient roles in the society and increasing their dependency relationship on their owners.

However, when it became obvious to the planters that the British Government was committed to the legal abolition of slavery, their attitude towards educating the slaves changed dramatically. The coercive mechanism of the slave society had to be replaced by a more subtle method of social control and one of the mechanisms used for this process, was the introduction of religious education.

The role of the Christian Missionaries therefore, became very important in this enterprise as they attempted to demonstrate to the planters that a good Christian could be a better labourer. This was done by socializing the children through the curriculum provided by the schools to accept their roles as "hewers of wood" and "drawers" of water in a white dominated society (Bacchus: 1980). Religious education thus served the role of an Ideological State Apparatus (ISA) for the continual exploitation and reinforcement of the unequal structure of domination and subordination which characterized the society.

In the period shortly before and after the abolition of slavery, the content of the curriculum offered in the primary schools was directed mainly at the normative re-orientation of the masses and their children to accept voluntarily their position as estate labourers on the lowest rung of the occupation and social ladder. It was not to excite them with doctrines of equality before God. They were taught to accept without question, the superiority and wealth of the colonizers as God's work (Rodney: 1974).

While the ideological orientation of education was formidable, concerns were expressed by the colonial administrators about the rising cost of education due to the increase in school enrolment. As a result, greater importance began to be focused on the type of education which was geared to develop in students "technical" or "practical skills" and the inculcation of other desirable attitudes towards manual work. This was to ensure that they continued working on the plantations as hired labourers and was also geared to assist them to improve their conditions of living without raising their level of occupational aspirations. As a consequence, subjects such as gardening, woodwork, hammock making, book binding, leather craft, hygiene, housecrafts including cookery and needlework began to appear on the curriculum of primary schools.

But these attempts ran into difficulties because, in the desire to keep the hierarchical structure "intact", some students began to acquire a more academic education and as a result were rewarded for their services with a higher level of income, partly because a number of them held junior positions in the civil service and other State enterprises.

At the turn of the twentieth century, there were a few economic changes in the society and discussions centred around who should be provided with what type of education. At a hearing in the Legislative Council in the nearby British colony of Trinidad which had a similar colonial experience to that of Guyana, a planter in 1926, made the following suggestion about the education of the masses

> Give them some education in the way of reading and writing, but no more. Even then I would say educate only the bright ones; not the whole mass. If you do educate the whole mass of agricultural population, you will be deliberately ruining the country...Give the bright ones a chance to win as many scholarships as they can; give the others three hours education a day...but if you keep them longer you will never get them to work in the fields. If you want agricultural

> labourers and not dissatisfaction, you must not keep them any longer (in school). (Williams: 1970:456).

However, the need to co-opt a few Guyanese into the slightly higher echelons of the occupational structure was recognized as a means of appeasing the masses by leading them to believe that their children were being allowed to compete for some higher level jobs, while in reality their chances of securing such positions were limited (Bacchus: 1980). This was so because of the very few openings that were available to them in the secondary schools, and a "good" secondary education was usually the prerequisite for such jobs. Whatever secondary school facilities existed, were only for a minority.

The curriculum of the secondary schools helped to prepare a small number of students for entry into (a) the administrative sector of the civil service or (b) the British Universities. In this process, it cultivated the belief in the cultural superiority of the British rulers which legitimized their roles as leaders in the society. Hence, the curriculum of the local secondary schools was often an exact replica of that offered in the secondary schools in Britain. For instance, specimens for Biology classes in Guyana had to be flown from England to be dissected by secondary school students studying for their examinations which were set by the English Universities examining boards. The curriculum and teaching methods were identical to those in the metropole and examiners marking external examinations in London could hardly have distinguished from which country the examination scripts came.

In addition, it prepared those seeking to enter a British university with the necessary education background to do so. Hence, the role of secondary schools was to prepare "junior" and "senior" comprador elite groups who would assist the colonizing power in maintaining their dominant position in the society. In this manner, the secondary curriculum was playing a legitimizing role. That was the reason why until the late 1930s, little attempt was made to ensure that all students had an equal chance of entering the available elite secondary schools in the country, such as Queen's College, Bishop's High (Government schools) St. Stanislaus College, St. Roses High and St. Joseph High (Catholic Denominational schools). In fact, the upper middle class groups successfully resisted such efforts and expressed the fear that the character of these schools would be adversely affected if they had too large an entry of students from working class background. The elite schools were therefore seen as a mechanism for status reconfirmation or cultural reproduction for the "upper" middle class groups in the society (Bacchus: 1980).

In addition, colonial education generally devalued the history, culture and aspirations of colonized peoples. According to Smith and Smith (1980:38), "education was mainly to write your name and sing "God Save the Queen". Maybe some religious verses were picked up in between." This was a common phenomenon in colonial societies.

The colonial powers were able to insulate themselves from well reasoned criticisms of the colonized people for a long time because of their capacity to control the type of education offered in these colonies. Through the education system, they linked their own views of military and economic power to a sense of moral authority by creating a philosophy in which "might" was equated to "right" and to be "right" was to be virtuous. It is ironic, as demonstrated in Chapter Two, that national leaders in Guyana after independence, being aware of these means of control and domination of a people, continued to use them.

By the 1930s an anti-colonial movement had begun to flourish, especially in the British Caribbean. This created the climate in which criticisms started to appear on all aspects of education. There were two types of criticism. Firstly, those from the masses who were dissatisfied with the opportunities for secondary and higher education and the quality of the primary education which adversely affected their children's chances of securing one of the few scholarships that were available to secondary schools, and secondly, those from the elites who decried the "academic" focus of the education offered in the schools and wanted to see the masses receive a more "useful" education - one that will better equip them for the realities of their lives. The

1931 curriculum in Trinidad reflected the latter

> The real weakness of the primary school at present consists not in its neglect of garden or handwork, but its failure to concentrate on essentials; and in the lack of adaption of curriculum to the qualifications and capability of the staff. The time-table of the average school is littered with subjects or fragments of subjects that bear no relation to the lives of the pupils or the qualifications and ability of the teachers (Williams: 1951:3).

And further, " ...the teaching of History and Geography included topics such as the Wars of the Roses and the Capes of Europe and was based upon text books unsuitable for British West Indian children" (Williams: 1951:15). As such, the West Indian Royal Commission of 1938 called for

> ...an end of the illogical and wasteful system which permits the education of a community predominantly engaged in agriculture to be based upon a literary curriculum fitting pupils only for white collar careers in which opportunities are comparatively limited ...Curricula are on the whole ill-adapted to the needs of the large mass of the population and adhere far too closely to the models which have become out of date in the British practice from which they have been blindly copied (Bacchus: 1980:97-98).

Admittedly, some of the above criticisms came from people interested in making the colonial system more efficient. Their aim was to train students to work within the system and to prepare the privileged few for university mainly in the United Kingdom or Canada.

The external General Certificate of Education Examination (GCE) which was taken at the end of the basic secondary education program remained as well, despite the report of a committee of the Secondary School Examination Council which stated that, "the examination in its present form is having a cramping effect upon the minds of teachers and pupils" (Williams: 1951:31). A report on the situation in Barbados commented that, "The whole focus of teaching... appears to be directed towards the benefit of the comparatively few children who are capable of reaching the standards prescribed by these examinations" (Williams: 1951:32).

The examinations reflected the interests, environment and knowledge of the external examiners who knew very little about the conditions in Guyana, and therefore chose to "stick" to their areas of expertise, thereby perpetuating the teaching of a curriculum that was inappropriate to the children of the colony. The implication of this system of education, was that, the curriculum nurtured class distinctions and class interests. However, much later, specifically after the 1940s, jobs which required a secondary education became available to children of the lower status groups in the society.

The rapid expansion of educational services occurring after the 1940s and up to the 1980s, can be seen as a political response to this popular pressure for greater opportunity for occupational and social mobility prior to and following the achievement of independence in 1966. The substitution of academic achievement for ascription based on ethnicity in the allocation of jobs was largely instrumental in raising the level of educational aspirations among the Africans, East Indians, Chinese and other previously disadvantaged groups. As the political system became increasingly "democratic", i.e. more responsive to the demands of the masses, the pressure on the Government to expand the educational services increased and resulted in the massive educational expansion in the country between 1945 and 1973. For example, during this period the number of primary schools rose from 251 to 399, while enrolment also increased from 61,734 pupils to 169,939. At the secondary level, the number of enrolment increased from 4,858 students to 24,897 (Bacchus: 1980).

The substance of the argument so far, is that, education is not a neutral enterprise. In fact, it is to a large extent a political act. Those who are responsible for curriculum development therefore, need to address several questions such as: What kind of knowledge and skills are seen to be of most worth to a society ? Which groups decide on the content of the curriculum to be offered in schools ? For whose benefit and purpose are such decisions made ?. These are central issues which structure the activities commonly associated with curriculum development and implementation and its role as an agent of social change.

In most societies, there are many competing groups which try to influence educational policies by attempting to determine the content of curriculum in schools. The outcome of this competition for the control of education and what is offered in the curriculum is usually a reflection of the amount of power which each of these groups can command at a particular point of time. In tracing curriculum development in the West Indies prior to 1945, Bacchus concludes that the curriculum that was actually offered at any one time in the primary schools

> was not the result of rational technical decisions made by bureaucrats simply acting on the wishes of the governing elites or the colonial authority. Nor was it the result of a negotiated compromise between the various groups involved (in the educational enterprise). Rather, it was the outcome of the relative amount of effective power which different groups interested or directly involved in education were in a position to exert at any one historical period. (Bacchus: 1986:31)

## Education in Post-Independence Guyana

Post independence Guyana inherited "an educational system not only rooted in the past, but also inchoate and confused as to render it almost stultifying to all but the brightest brains and certainly frustrating to the majority of our teachers" (Critchlow: 1974:9). There was the need therefore, to change the educational policy in order to reflect the economic and social needs of the Guyanese society by producing in the shortest possible time local personnel with adequate skills to meet the manpower requirements of the society. A more relevant curriculum was therefore considered necessary to achieve this goal.

Certain structural changes were attempted in the educational system in the 1960s to meet this new challenge. The changes were not only a direct outcome of the decolonization process, but were also stimulated by the fervour of the human capital theory (HCT). According to this theory, economic development and social change were assumed to be dependent on the improvement of the human resources along with modernized attitudes and behaviours.

The Guyanese authorities therefore, resolved to achieve national development through the expansion of educational services particularly at the post primary level. As a result from 1960 to 1974, enrolment at the secondary level increased by 265.5% or an annual average of 17.7% (Baksh: 1978). Similar expansion was evident at the Technical/Vocational and other tertiary institutions. This educational expansion took an increasing share of the recurrent budget. For instance, in 1974 it reached as high as 17.5% (Baksh: 1978). But since then, it has declined significantly to 7.4% in 1983 (The Europa Year Book: 1988). This was largely due to the decline of the economy.

## The Structure of the Education System of Guyana

To understand the intricacies of curriculum changes in the different types of schools in Guyana, it is useful for the reader to have an overall picture of the structure of the country's educational system.

Prior to 1976, the system of primary education in Guyana was under dual control i.e. the Government and various denominational bodies. Private individuals or organizations were also allowed to operate secondary and nursery schools. However, from 1976, the PNC Government took over full control of all educational institutions (though with some opposition from the denominational bodies) from Nursery to University level. The diagram on page 99 shows the hierarchical structure of education system in the country.

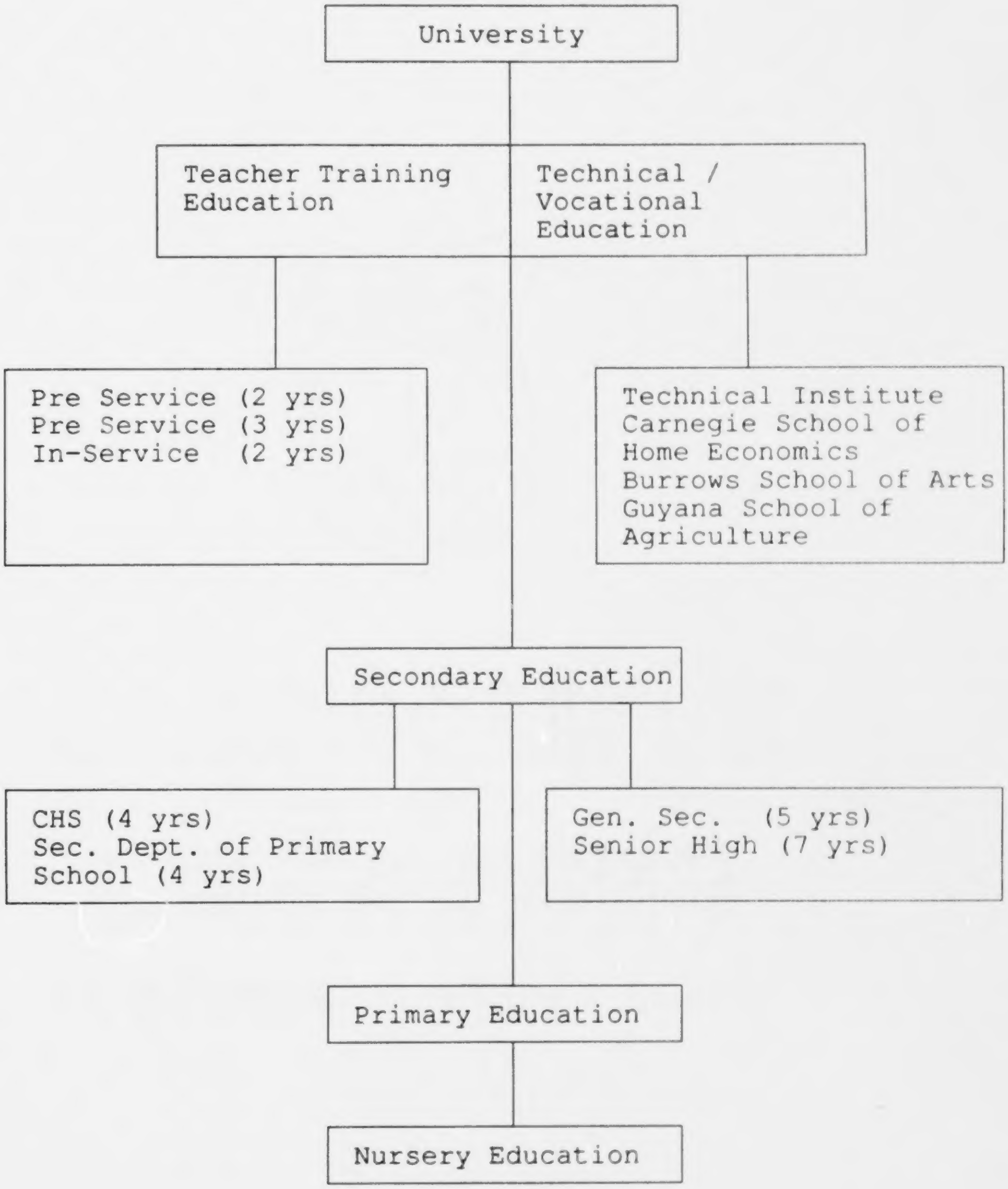
The number of students attending schools in the 1983-84 academic year can be seen in Table 4.1.

**TABLE 4.1 ENROLMENT OF STUDENTS AT THE VARIOUS LEVELS OF EDUCATION IN 1983-1984 ACADEMIC YEAR**

| TYPE OF INSTITUTION | ENROLMENT | NUMBER OF INSTITUTIONS |
|---|---|---|
| Nursery | 30174 | 359 |
| Primary | 144055 | 425 |
| Secondary | 47332 | 84 |
| Teacher Colleges | 482 | 3 |
| Technical/Vocational | 2843 | 4 |
| University | 1580 | 1 |

**Source: A Digest of Educational Statistics 1984:7-8.**

**FIGURE I STRUCTURE OF EDUCATION IN GUYANA**


University
Teacher Training Education
Technical / Vocational Education
Pre Service (2 yrs)
Pre Service (3 yrs)
In-Service (2 yrs)
Technical Institute
Carnegie School of Home Economics
Burrows School of Arts
Guyana School of Agriculture
Secondary Education
CHS (4 yrs)
Sec. Dept. of Primary School (4 yrs)
Gen. Sec. (5 yrs)
Senior High (7 yrs)
Primary Education
Nursery Education

The curriculum of the primary and secondary schools is largely that which was used in the colonial days, but this has been undergoing changes in the post-independence period. Pupils spend two years in the Nursery schools in a program which is supposed to develop their social, intellectual and psychomotor skills through curriculum activities which are based on current theories of child development.

This education and training is continued in the primary schools for 6 years. At this level, the curriculum is organized on a subject basis which includes English Language, Mathematics, General Science, Health Education, Music and Art. In addition, pupils are exposed to training in Agriculture and other non-academic subjects. On completion of primary schooling, pupils normally write the Secondary School Entrance Examination (SSEE) in English, Mathematics, Social Studies and Science. On the results of this examination, they are placed in "appropriate" secondary schools.

Secondary education is offered in the "secondary departments" of primary schools, in the Community High Schools and the regular secondary schools. The training which is provided in the Community High Schools is considered necessary for the economic development of the local communities and through this, the country as a whole. After three years of study in these institutions, students write the Secondary Schools Proficiency Examination (SSPE) Part I. The successful ones are often placed in the General Secondary

Schools while the others continue their education which focuses on pre-vocational training. These write the SSPE Part II at the end of the fourth year.

At the General Secondary Schools, students are prepared for the academically oriented GCE and CXC examinations. Further, students at the Senior Secondary Schools prepare for the GCE "A" level examinations, success at which makes them eligible for University entrance. In addition, a school of "excellence" called the "President's College" (the only residential school in the country) was established in 1985. The intent is to provide enhanced opportunities for high achievers at the SSEE.

Technical and vocational training is offered in the two cities in the country - Georgetown and New Amsterdam - in special institutions established for this purpose. There are full-time, part-time, day release and evening students enroled in a range of courses from Home Economics to Agriculture, Craft to Mechanical Engineering, Business to Electrical studies.

Two other institutions cater for the blind and mentally handicapped. As well, there is an Extra Mural Education program, attached to the Faculty of Education at the University of Guyana which provides adult or continuing education at over 30 centres in the country. The University of Guyana and the Teacher's Colleges provide further education at the tertiary level. The Teacher's Colleges offer pre-service and in-service training for teachers of the primary and secondary schools. In addition, the Faculty of Education, University of Guyana, provides undergraduate and some post-graduate training in a number of areas.

Higher Education is provided at the University of Guyana which offers courses leading to a first degree in the Faculties of Agriculture, Art, Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, Education, Medicine and Technology. In addition to the first degree programs offered in the various faculties, a number of diploma courses and MA programs is also offered.

## Curriculum Reforms

After independence in 1966, there were many types of curriculum changes in the primary and secondary schools in Guyana and these can be grouped into two categories. Firstly, technical reforms aimed at preparing the population for a more efficient work force which will aid economic development and secondly, ideological reforms aimed at developing legitimacy for the State and the PNC Government.

It is important to note that the two categories are not mutually exclusive, but to a large extent, the technical reforms were evident in mathematics, the sciences and the practical and vocational subjects while subjects such as social studies including national policy and co-operatives, agriculture and guidance and extra-curricular activities such as mass games, national service, attending rallies and parades were designed for ideological purposes. Even the reading books (Timehri Readers, Rampat Family, A Day at the Farm, A Co-operative Poultry Farm) at the primary level were ideologically oriented to the goals of the PNC Government. Similarly, essay topics in the Language Arts Curriculum Guide also reflected governmental goals. For example, some of the essay topics were: We enjoy working on the Farm, The Family attends a Flag Raising Ceremony, Living Together in Our Community, Class Two visits the School Farm, A Happy Mashramani, The May Day Parade and The People's Parade, An Outing to Melanie Damishana (The Language Arts Curriculum Guide).

The importance of political ideology in education was emphasized in the "rationale' for Social Studies/National Policy which states that it is "imperative that political education be an integral component of every school curriculum in which purposeful programmes of schooling can promote social awareness, social participation and social commitment to the communities of which we are part" (Social Studies In Guyana: Curriculum Development Centre n.d.p.:1). As a result of such concern, a Political Education Committee was constituted by the Ministry of Education which had the responsibility of organizing a Political Education Program for all schools in Guyana. A booklet entitled "Working Proposals for a Programme of Political Education" was produced with the following objectives

> promoting an understanding of the political culture of Guyanese society, increasing ideology, values and social processes.
>
> strengthening commitment to our Socialist political values...our political culture, as well as a capacity for improving various aspects of this culture in the light of group or individual experience.
>
> providing practical opportunities for participating in activities that generate or heighten political consciousness; and generally for developing competence in political behaviour. (Social Studies in Guyana: Curriculum Development Centre: n.d.p.:1-2).

This meant that education at both the primary and secondary levels in Guyana was designed to provide political or ideological orientation towards achieving the goals and/or legitimizing the PNC.

Generally, there was a major change of the curriculum in 1967 at the primary level and for the first time, Primary Science and Social Studies were formally introduced at this level of the educational system. The former replaced Nature Study while the latter replaced history and geography because it provided a more integrated approach to the study of the local environment or social milieu. Similarly, the Language Arts became an umbrella subject for reading, English, poetry, etc. Grammar as a subject was dropped from the curriculum since it was felt that it should be learned incidentally. In addition, heavy emphasis was placed on agriculture, stressing the principle of scientific production and cooperative organization.

Further in the 1960s, the School Leaving Certificate was replaced by Preliminary Certificate Examination (PCE) and students began to enter for the UK conducted external examination - the College of Preceptors Examination (CPE). Later in the 1970s and 1980s, co-operatives, national policy and guidance were introduced as subjects in the primary and secondary schools. Further, the metric system replaced the imperial system of weights and measurements. In addition, the curriculum was diversified when the multilateral and community high schools were established in the 1970s. These schools were vocationally oriented aimed at providing students with those skills and knowledge considered necessary to develop their communities and the country at large.

The replacement of the General Certificate of Education examination (which was conducted locally by the University of London, UK) by the Caribbean Examination Council examination (a regional Caribbean examining body in 1977) was another attempt at curriculum reform, aimed at "decolonizing" the society by making the content of secondary education more "appropriate and relevant" to the Guyanese and the Caribbean environment.

But despite the fact that these curriculum reforms were designed to achieve national needs, external forces still exerted an influence on the nature of the curriculum in Guyana. For example, the vocationalization of secondary education by the establishment of the Multi-lateral and Community High schools was adopted from the British Comprehensive and North American Composite High school models. However, it is also important to note that, most of these reforms in Technical/Vocational education were not introduced in the elite secondary schools which provided a regular academic curriculum. In fact, there was strong opposition from the middle and upper class sections in the society to such curriculum being introduced in these schools.

Curricula developed overseas, were copied in a number of subject areas such as the natural sciences, mathematics, business studies, accounts, general electricity, technical drawings, engineer etc. However, it is interesting to note that these subject areas did not keep pace with the changes in their original form. But in other subject areas, efforts were made to restructure the content in order to integrate them with the ideological orientation of the State. For example, the teaching of Guyanese History, Geography of Guyana; Social Studies focusing on local community, national festivals and events, national symbols - flag, anthem, pledge, coat-of-arms, national monuments and awards, local political and economic systems, socialism - theory and practice, socialist ideology, nationalization, Government protection of the Nation - the role of the army, police, militia, national service; Co-operatives as a way of life, working together as Guyanese, working together for nation building, forming co-operative societies; National Policy teaching nationalism, loyalty, patriotism, respect for authority, aspects of Guyanese political history, the PNC as a vanguard party, chapters from the "Declaration of Sophia" - the role of the PNC party, a socialist party, the social use of land, ownership and mobilization of natural resources, the co-operative: the small man's institution, the code of conduct (for party members), we are in the vanguard; Agriculture - developing positive attitudes to agriculture as means to be self sufficient in food, increase local agricultural production as a means to support the policy of import substitution, use of local resources for economic development, develop agro-industries and trade. (Taken from Curriculum Guides).

However, the technical curriculum reforms failed to contribute effectively to the socio-economic development of the society. In fact, there seemed to be a continuing disjunction between the products of the school system and the economy as an increasing number of primary and secondary school students were leaving the system without acquiring the appropriate knowledge and skills for employment (see Chapter 6). This situation often led to high unemployment especially among the school graduates.

A significant feature of the ideological curriculum reforms in Guyana, was that, they were being introduced with the aim of supporting the authoritarian and oppressive relationships which came to characterize the new political order. According to Fanon (1967), Freire (1970) and others who described the contradictions created by independence with the efforts of leaders of independence movements, "in the initial stages the oppressed becomes the oppressor" and they were always afraid of the freedom of the masses. One consequence was that, in Guyana, the products of an effective education system and the efforts of its teachers to be creative were likely to be considered "subversive".

## Teacher Training

Teacher education in Guyana came to play an important role in the efforts by the PNC Government to achieve its goals of providing "proper" socialization for the students attending schools. Teachers were the major actors to transmit to the students, cognitive knowledge, social skills and the socialist values of the State. In other words, the training should provide teachers with the technical, ideological and methodological competencies so that they could discharge their duties in an efficient manner.

It was often the case that almost all curriculum changes in the teacher's colleges in Guyana, during the period of the study, were an imposition by the Government. This was particularly important in its effort to get the institutions to provide the intending teachers with the technical training in order to inculcate in their students the skills, knowledge and attitudes considered valuable for the social and economic development of the country as perceived by the PNC Government. Further, it was the assumption that, their training and ideological orientation would better equip them to transmit to their students the type of skills, knowledge and attitudes which were likely to be supportive of the PNC Government and its style of development.

According to the Government policy, student teachers and practising teachers needed to re-examine and change their teaching styles or methodologies. They were supposed to emphasize group work, promote initiative, develop problem solving attitudes, move from memorization and rote recall to the promotion of concept formation, and acquire creative thinking skills (Critchlow: 1974). In other words, students were to become less dependent on teachers.

But these laudable goals became distorted in the process of implementation by a number of factors such as the authoritarian style of leadership in schools and the volume of facts/data which students had to amass for the Secondary School Entrance Examination at the primary level and the CXC and GCE examinations at the secondary level.

For a number of reasons, rote learning and memorization continued to characterize the instructional strategies of teachers. Many of the teachers were academically and professionally ill-equipped for their jobs. In addition, students had limited access to educational resources such as texts, laboratory facilities, equipment and other instructional materials etc. due to the poor economy. The style of teaching adopted in most schools was therefore, conditioned by the mechanical instructional approach i.e. examination results were more important regardless of whether the children's knowledge was useful or soon forgotten. The traditional method of teaching where the teacher was the source of knowledge, and the students were seen as repositories of information still continued. The teacher disseminated the knowledge in note-form while students took copious notes which were to be regurgitated at quizzes or at examinations.

"Low level questions" which required the recall of facts were frequently asked by the teacher, while "high level questions" such as those dealing with "whys" and "hows" were seldom asked. This would have been a contradiction in the type of authoritarianism that came to characterize the political system. As indicated above, the poor quality of teaching also resulted from the employment of poorly qualified teachers. In fact, new recruits to teaching very often emulated the teaching styles of their previous teachers. The emphasis on rote learning without students questioning what was being taught was a reflection of the type of relationships and behaviours for which the schools prepared their students.

The instructional techniques used reinforced the belief that a rigidly hierarchical order of the society was necessary for stability (Bacchus: 1974). The learning and repetition of facts tended to reinforce students' passivity and were also functional in buttressing the authoritarian structure of the school and the wider society. This approach increased the tendency of the masses to act without contemplation when ordered to do so, since the mode of instruction used in schools militated against the development of a spirit of enquiry. Students were taught to accept without questioning the facts which were presented to them, to follow rules, and not to challenge assumptions or the relevance of the information provided. In fact, one wondered whether in the political context, practising teachers were aware that there were alternative pedagogical styles that they could have used.

## Government's Control of Education in Guyana

As previously indicated, the PNC Government operated an authoritarian State and this undemocratic and repressive rule was reflected in the administration of the educational system. One of the crucial acts of the Government in this regard, was to nationalize all private and denominational schools in 1976 which allowed it to have total control over all educational institutions in the country and the content of the education offered in these institutions.

Prior to 1976, the denominational bodies, private institutions and parents were in a position to have some say in the development of the curriculum to be implemented in the schools. But, with total governmental control of education policies and the planning and implementation of curriculum changes, the role of other interest groups in this area no longer existed.

In an effort to maintain overall control of the content of education, the Government established the Curriculum Development Centre in 1971 and staffed by "experts" who decided on the kind of content to be incorporated in the curriculum. In most cases these "competent individuals" were selected because they were usually supportive of or sympathetic to the party in power or willing to accept without comment the dictates of the Government.

One of the alleged aims of the nationalization of schools, was to ensure that access to education was open to all on the basis of ability rather than religion, class, race, colour, creed, gender and region/location. In other words, nationalization of education was to provide equality of educational opportunity for all students. However, in Guyana, it soon became clear that nationalization and secularization of schools was not primarily to achieve this objective, but was intended to give the Government full control of all educational institutions including the right to appoint and transfer their staff without question.

Government's ownership and control of schools meant that open opposition to educational policies, programmes and to curriculum reforms of the Government would be easily overcome. What was taught in the schools was consistent with the Government's perception of what it thought was worth knowing by future Guyanese citizens. Government officials planned and implemented educational policies, programmes and curriculum reforms without consultation with the populace and even with the teachers. In fact, teachers were mere receivers of planned curriculum which, because of the centralized process by which the content of education was decided upon, did not usually reflect the needs and interests of the students.

Because of the decline of legitimacy of the Burnham/PNC Government, efforts were increasingly made to win support for its policies. This was attempted through various strategies including its monopolistic control of the educational institutions. Its efforts were then directed at developing the curriculum and the extra-curricular activities of all schools which were to inculcate in students a sense of subservience, loyalty and patriotism to the particular view of the State as was being portrayed by the Government. This obviously had serious implications for democracy since the political party in power was deemed to have "ascendancy over the State".

Students had to participate in compulsory "mass games" and national service activities as part of this process of "re-education". Youth arms of the National Service unit (Young National Cadet and Brigade Corps- YNCBC) were attached to primary and secondary schools and teacher trainees who were allocated to such units, served as important vehicles to indoctrinate students into the political philosophy of the Government eg. socialism, co-operativism, self-help, self-reliance and self sufficiency, feed, clothes and house the nation. Students, along with teachers, at the various educational institutions were required to attend political rallies, to line the roads to welcome the Party or visiting officials and to engage in North-Korean style mass games to deify the President. In such activities, school time and money were channelled to efforts aimed at glorifying a repudiated regime (Spinner: 1984).

In attempting to develop the "new Guyanese citizen" as proposed by the Government, the teachers were expected to select topics, highlighting particular version of local history, literature, social studies and agriculture to help achieve this goal. Great emphasis was therefore placed on the ideals of heroism and major events of Guyanese people. But, the information presented in this field was far from "objective". For instance, emphasis was placed on Black heroes such as Cuffy and Critchlow and no attention was paid to the heroic efforts of the members of other ethnic groups. To further create this "new citizen", guidance and counselling was introduced in the school system to condition the students to accept voluntarily the ideological position of the PNC. In order to reinforce the dominance and submissive relationship which came to characterize the relationships in many areas of the Guyanese society, the pedagogy used in schools tended to be authoritarian with respect for authority being strongly emphasized.

As indicated before, the curriculum content was intended to popularize and inculcate support for the existing political regime. This can be observed in the curriculum subject referred to as "National Policy" which was aimed at developing in students partisan, pride and love for the nation (which in fact meant the PNC) and inculcating an appreciation for socialist and cooperative objectives as defined by the Burnham's regime (Singh: 1988). Not only was a sense of national consciousness and patriotism to be developed, but students were also taught to deify their political leaders. For instance, in some schools, students prayed daily for the longevity of the political leaders and were taught through their prayers to respect and show reverence for those whom the Government placed in authority.

In schools, the authority figures were obviously the head teachers and senior teachers who were very often politically affiliated to the ruling party. They ensured that the young minds accepted unquestionably the propaganda of the ruling party. Pictures of political leaders in schools, flag raising ceremonies, recitation of the National Pledge and singing the National Anthem, with students and teachers wearing attire displaying captions of the ruling party, were all symbolic mechanisms of indoctrination.

Students also developed a distorted perception of the Guyanese historical reality as a result of the curriculum materials with which they were presented. Since the PNC took over control of the State, contemporary history as taught in the schools tended to glorify the PNC Government and its leaders and de-emphasized the contributions of former Governments. Text books such as "A Destiny to Mould" (an edited version of Burnham's speeches) "The Declaration of Sophia" (a key address given by Burnham in 1974, enunciating the doctrine of the paramountcy of the party), "Cooperative Republic" and "From Pain to Peace" by the previous Prime Minister, Hamilton Green, formed the core of the prescribed readings in educational institutions including the Teacher's Colleges. In fact, teachers were coerced to purchase these texts which tended to serve similar role to that of the Bible during the post-slavery period.

In addition to controlling and dictating the curriculum content and activities at the primary and secondary schools, the ruling party maintained several ideological institutes that were lavished with scarce financial and other resources. One such institution is the Kuru Kuru Cooperative College (KKCC) which was established to train managers for cooperative enterprises (Singh: 1988). It also became an indoctrination centre where public servants, including teachers as well as the military personnel, were sent for short courses. The PNC also controlled the Cuffy Ideological Institute (CII) for the training of party officials. Advancement or promotional opportunity in certain jobs and/or sectors of the economy was contingent on the successful completion of theoretical and practical courses at these institutions (Singh: 1988). In fact, most head-teachers and aspiring head-teachers, despite their affiliation to the ruling party, had to undertake some form of organized political indoctrination at either of these two institutions, if they were to be promoted further. The rationale of this program was to help them maintain control of school activities, teachers and the educational system, while at the same time, carrying out governmental policies and programmes regardless of opposition. Even the selection for Government scholarships and further training was based, not only upon political affiliation, but preference was given to those who had some formal indoctrination in one of the ideological training programs provided by a Government agency. In fact, the content of every Worker's Education Program whether divisional or in-house "must contain sessions in ideological/political and co-operative education " (Ministry of Education: Annual Report: 1984:222)

In 1985, the Government opened its President's College which was dubbed the "School of Excellence" where students were, in addition to being provided with academic and other programs, inculcated with the cooperative ethic and ideological commitment to socialism (Singh: 1988) and the policies of the ruling party. Not only were students to develop socialist consciousness and be prepared to defend the country either ideologically or physically, but those teachers who were to be employed at the President's College, were closely screened and had to undertake one of the political orientation courses conducted by the Kuru Kuru Cooperative College or the Cuffy Ideological Institute. Some senior administrators who had completed their political orientation locally were sent to Cuba for further indoctrination into socialist education. (Ministry of Education: 1985)

Since centralized political control of education began in 1976, the quality of education seemed to have deteriorated enormously. One indication of this was the poor performance of secondary students at the external examinations set by the University of London and the Caribbean Examination Council. Table 4.2 shows the performance of Guyanese students in comparison with some of their Caribbean counterparts at the CXC and GCE examinations.

**TABLE 4.2 CXC AND GCE "A" LEVEL RESULTS IN 1990.**

| **COUNTRY** | **5 CXC & OVER** | **%** | **2 "A" LEVEL & OVER** | **%** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Trinidad | 2,555 | 52 | 1040 | 42 |
| Jamaica | 1,228 | 25 | 500 | 8 |
| Barbados | 386 | 18 | 158 | - |
| Guyana | 182 | 4 | 74 | - |

**Source: Mirror: Sunday May 31, 1992:5**

Singh (1988) bemoaned the fact that, secondary students in Guyana were performing so badly in comparison with the other Caribbean territories that the Government put restrictions on the unauthorized disclosure of examination statistics. Nevertheless, some information did find its way to the public. For instance, it was disclosed in the local newspaper that a leading secondary school in the city registered 196 students in 1981 to take the GCE "O" level examination. Of these 170 failed in all subjects. Only one passed in four subjects and 25 passed between one and three subjects. An acceptable minimum pass is usually considered to be five subjects at one sitting at CXC or GCE "O" level.

There were several reasons for such deterioration in the work of the schools. The Government was unable to adequately fund the programme of free education. For example, its expenditure on education in 1980/1981 represented 11.2% of its total expenditure, but this fell to an all time low of 3.1% in 1989 (Stabroek News: 1990). As a consequence, school buildings were in dire need of repair, there were shortages of basic textbooks (and if available they were very costly and hence out of reach of the poor students) exercise books, equipment and other instructional materials. These disastrous effects on the educational system were no doubt reflected in the poor performance of the economy which showed negative growth rate during the past decade. On the other hand, the poor economic performance of the country made it difficult for adequate resources to be provided for education which exacerbated the poor academic performance of students.

Despite the steady decline of the economy, the Government did not reduce its expenditures on the military, the bureaucracies and other paraphernalia such as mass games, flamboyant republic celebrations etc. These were considered important by the Government in order to maintain the loyalty of its supporters. Table 4.3 provides information on governmental expenditures on the military and paramilitary organizations and education from 1960 to 1989. It is important to note that as from 1975 the annual expenditures on the military and paramilitary organizations began to increase significantly as compared to education expenditures. During the PPP period in office, the expenditures on education more than doubled that which were spent on the security forces. It is also significant to note that, the increase in educational expenditures over the years was the result of the high inflation rate and to the fact that approximately 65% to 75% of the education budget was allocated to wages and salaries of teachers and other education personnel and not necessarily to improve educational facilities.

In addition to the problems mentioned above, the regime conducted periodic witch hunts on the teaching profession. Teachers who were critical of the Government's policies or were suspected of being sympathetic to opposition parties or not supportive of the Government, were arbitrarily dismissed

## TABLE 4.3 EXPENDITURE ON THE POLICE, ARMY, NATIONAL SERVICE AND EDUCATION FROM 1960 TO 1989

| Year | Police | Army | Volunteer Service | Education |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1960 | 3,482.5 | - | - | 6,860.0 |
| 1961 | 3,533.6 | - | 112.7 | 7,459.2 |
| 1962 | 4,011.1 | - | 117.3 | 11,728.9 |
| 1963 | 4,351.3 | 400.0 | 101.5 | 10,088.7 |
| 1964 | 4,507.9 | 654.4 | 51.7 | 11,493.4 |
| 1965 | 4,860.9 | 1,000.0 | 350.4 | 14,097.6 |
| 1966 | 5,327.9 | 2,080.0 | 207.5 | 16,670.1 |
| 1967 | 6,148.5 | 3,540.5 | - | 18,983.4 |
| 1968 | 6,367.2 | 2,977.7 | - | 20,521.3 |
| 1970 | 8,020.6 | 6,471.6 | - | 22,967.4 |
| 1971 | 8,130.6 | 6,064.9 | - | 21,888.7 |
| 1972 | 8,468.2 | 7,356.6 | - | 26,830.6 |
| 1973 | 8,938.9 | 8,769.9 | National Service | 28,939.2 |
| 1974 | 13,540.9 | 15,132.4 | 6,492.6 | 43,955.6 |
| 1975 | 16,178.3 | 17,193.7 | 30,502.4 | 55,540.0 |
| 1976 | 16,791.8 | 46,517.3 | 20,500.0 | 59,276.5 |
| 1977 | 18,277.0 | 38,555.9 | 14,138.5 | 77,524.9 |
| 1978 | 21,960.7 | 42,618.3 | 8,000.0 | 85,895.5 |
| 1979 | 23,692.2 | 14,045.2 | NA* | 89,748.8 |
| 1980 | 28,634.9 | 55,871.6 | NA* | NA* |
| 1981 | 33,740.1 | 62,600.0 | NA* | NA* |
| 1982 | 30,620.3 | 52,000.0 | 24,368.0 | 83,020.2 |
| 1983 | 40,378.0 | 75,335.0 | 30,000.0 | 98,382.0 |
| 1984 | 41,341.0 | 73,888.0 | 33,000.0 | 97,952.0 |
| 1985 | 55,093.0 | 113,525.0 | 31,095.0 | 123,872.0 |
| 1986 | 69,996.0 | 110,308.0 | 37,196.0 | 83,159.0 |
| 1987 | 71,974.0 | 94,402.0 | 33,507.0 | 91,281.0 |
| 1988 | 95,394.0 | 104,068.0 | 39,251.0 | 146,905.0 |
| 1989 | 128,775.0 | 149,113.0 | 52,781.0 | 216,884.0 |

**Source: Budget Estimates**

**Note:**

1) **Estimates are calculated in (G$ 000)**
2) **These are estimates and do not include supplementary budgets passed during the years to cater for unplanned expenditures.**
3) **These figures do not include expenditures on the People's Militia.**
4) **NA* these figures were not available.**

or transferred in a manner that inflicted some degree of hardship on them (Singh: 1988). Tremendous insecurity therefore existed in the teaching profession, with obvious ill effects on the quality of instructions provided for the students. What seemed to have increased the degree of apathy among teachers was the fact that, the majority of those in the executive positions of the Teacher's Unions and even the school administrators were politically affiliated to the ruling regime. As indicated in chapter Two, the President of Guyana appoints the Chairperson of the Teaching Service Commission (TSC) which is primarily responsible for the appointments and promotions of all teachers in the nursery, primary and secondary schools. This meant that appointments, especially at the senior levels are highly selective and the candidate must satisfy the President. According to a member of the Commission, senior appointments are based, not only on academic qualifications and experiences, but on the "suitability" of the applicant/candidate, whatever the term might mean, since it is not clearly spelt out. But judging from the manner the TSC is constituted, one might be inclined to suspect that "suitability" means political allegiance and loyalty to the PNC and Burnham. Therefore, teachers at the lower ranks who were unhappy about any aspect of employment, were afraid to express their opinions, because of the fear of being dismissed or victimized.

Furthermore, teachers were not given the opportunity to engage in a pedagogic style that might have developed critical thinking in their students. The repressive nature of the State had infiltrated the school system and teachers had to carry out instructions which came from above. Teachers had no choice since the Government was their sole employer. What seemed to have been present in the administration of the schools was a hierarchical system of domination and submission. Each higher level in the hierarchy dominated the lower rung with students being the most submissive victims. The authoritarian pedagogical style was a powerful means of helping to transmit the values which characterized the policies of the State.

Similar activities can be witnessed at the University of Guyana - the only highest tertiary institution of learning in the country. The university suffered from an exodus of qualified staff partly due to the direct political influence and victimization by the ruling regime (Singh: 1988). For example, Dr. Walter Rodney, the internationally well known Guyanese historian, was offered by the Appointment Committee, the Professorship in History in 1974, but the Government refused to allow the appointment to be made. In addition, there were such cases as the dismissal of Kathleen Drayton and Dr. Insanally in 1974, and McCormick and Tennessee in 1982. These were clear indications of the high-handed nature of the PNC controlled UG Boards or Governors in dealing with political dissidents. Neither the academic qualifications nor the competencies of any of these individuals was questioned. Such acts showed the attitude of the PNC Government to the university's recruitment of individuals with opinions with which the Government did not concur. Further, such actions became a deterrent to any other teaching staff who might have wished to express any opinion with which the regime disagreed.

The PNC also kept many of the faculty and students under surveillance (Singh: 1988), especially those students who were PNC supporters and were granted Government scholarships to study at the university. These students were politically active in controlling the university student's society. This was done by getting themselves elected on the student's council or by canvassing for their colleagues who were Government sponsored. Like the national elections, these students elections were rigged (Singh: 1988), and therefore fraudulent. It should be noted that state resources were often utilized in the student election process.

## Summary

Post-independence Guyana seemed to have been faced with a paradox of development. There were many contradictions within the society leading to economic retrogression and degeneration. Since all the subsystems in society are interdependent, the "dysfunctionality" of any one results in the disequilibration of others and eventually the entire social system. Cumulatively the impact had resulted in the decline in the level of academic achievement of the students and the fostering of political authoritarianism. Dysfunctionality in the economic system, which had been largely the outcomes of the authoritarian political system, also had grave consequences for the educational system.

After independence and the creation of a "Cooperative Socialist Republic", curriculum content in Guyana as was indicated above, was to a large extent officially determined by the "Government". However, these reforms seemed to reinforce the arguments advanced by Apple (1981), Giroux (1981), Willis (1987), Carnoy (1978), Bowles and Gintis (1976) et al. that, the knowledge and skills, values, attitudes and beliefs or the cultural components of the curriculum that were transmitted in the schools, were highly ideological, aimed at maintaining the position of the dominant groups and the continued supremacy of the PNC. It did not encourage individual or societal emancipation. In fact, the education encouraged students to be compliant and to accept voluntarily the rules and regulations of the school and the work place as dictated by the Government.

The education offered also raised the occupational aspirations of students to seek white collar jobs which had increasingly resulted in high level of unemployment among those with formal education. For instance, the total labour force increased by 62,000 or 42.4% between 1946 and 1970, but the increase in the number of jobs for the same period was only 31,800 or 21.8% (Baksh: 1978). In order to rectify this situation, efforts began to be re-directed at curriculum changes (especially with the introduction of the Community and Multi-lateral High Schools) which stressed diversification and vocationalization of the curriculum offered to the masses to prepare them with the knowledge and practical skills, that were to enable them to become employable in a variety of jobs in their local environment. In effect, the rationale behind the diversification of the curriculum was to provide the appropriate knowledge and skills that would aid the process of local capital accumulation and economic development.

While the policy makers intended to make education/curriculum reforms more realistic, however, in essence, it meant that as in colonial times, education was once more used to dampen the occupational aspirations of the masses. For the elites, the traditional secondary grammar schools still remained largely intact (Bacchus: 1975). This therefore, tended to reproduce the social relations and the rigid stratification system in the society - social and structural relations which contradicted the ideals of the "so called" socialist society that the PNC was hoping to create.

The education of the elite or senior secondary schools was also being modified with subjects in the natural sciences gradually replacing the classics. Such curriculum changes enabled the children of the elites to become better equipped for migration to the North as well as gaining employment in other parts of the Caribbean and in regional and international organizations such as CARIFTA, CARICOM, UNESCO, UN, World Bank, etc.

Migration of those who received this type of education increased and this was reflected in the magnitude of brain-drain that was occurring in skills and expertise needed for national development. For instance, between 1965 and 1976, emigration from Guyana to the USA and Canada (excluding "visitors" to these countries who soon "disappeared") increased from 842 to 45,333 (Baksh: 1978). Only 2.5% of the total number of emigrants could be classified as unskilled, while 12.8% were classified as executive and professional workers, 46.8% as clerical and white collar workers, and 31,7% as skilled and semi-skilled (Baksh: 1978). Recent estimates put emigration at 1000 per month or about 3% of the working age population per annum (Guyana: The Economic Recovery Programme and Beyond: August 21, 1989). In addition to migration to the more economic developed countries, there was a large number of qualified and professionally competent Guyanese teachers who migrated to the other neighbouring Caribbean countries.

The relationship between curriculum development and social change in post independence Guyana was characterized by a plethora of internal contradictions. Racial, gender, geographical, social class and political discrimination, lack of democracy as manifested in the State tampering with voters' lists, thereby denying the regime's presumed opponents the right to vote at national and local elections, were all factors which inhibited the successful implementation of curriculum reforms.

An aura of uncertainty, fear and despair pervaded the society as political repression was intensified and the economy continued to deteriorate. The linking of the economy with the international capitalist system which continued to reinforce dependency, along with the tenacious efforts to hold on to power by the ruling elite worsened the situation, thus making any curriculum reforms unsuccessful. Although one may allude to the notion that radical pedagogy can be an effective mechanism for emancipation, one has to be cognizant of the fact that, the Guyanese society was rather repressive with the military and para-military organizations pledging full commitment to the ruling regime and carrying out the wishes of the regime. In this context, it became virtually impossible for teachers to introduce any radical pedagogy.

While education was supported by a rhetoric that referred to developing critical thinking, paradoxically the society as a whole, prevented teachers from thinking about or devising alternative learning possibilities. Education became, as Illich suggested an instrument of social control, manipulating the content of the student's imagination. The socialist/political or ideological rhetoric as manifested in the national curriculum, along with the curricula of the Cuffy Ideological Institute, were clear examples of the Government's intention to concentrate on political indoctrination to bolster an illegal regime (Singh: 1988). In fact, independent/critical teachers were liable to loose their jobs.

There was also evidence of major efforts to suppress human rights in the country as a result of a de facto one party State which rigidly controlled education and access to information. With the violations of human rights, and the authoritarian and undemocratic state control, parents', teachers' and students' inputs in curriculum were non-existent. What was taught in schools reflected the Government's perception of what it conceived as worth knowing.

Given the segmented nature of the society, one would have expected that an important subject as race relations would have been actively dealt with by schools. But the regime was not making any tangible effort to grapple with the issue. One approach could have been the introduction of a multicultural educational policy implemented as in Canada. This policy would have assisted students to familiarize themselves with and create an awareness of and develop a positive attitude towards the values, traditions, customs, culture etc. of the major ethnic groups in the society. This might have ensured an appreciation for each other on the part of the population and fostered the notion of "unity in diversity" rather than living in a world of suspicion, distrust, insecurity, ethnic stereotyping, tension, and even racial animosity.

It would seem that strategies for socio-cultural integration were unimportant to the Government since the regime used coercive measures to achieve its goal. In fact, the colonial policy of "divide and rule" was actively practised by the PNC, since it discriminated against the non-Afro-Guyanese and kept them in a state of submission through the use of physical force and economic measures.

Such discriminatory policy had repercussions on the reward structure in the society which favoured Afro-Guyanese in the appointments to almost all senior and even lower level positions. Since, education as well as political factors tended to determine access to high status jobs which enhanced social and economic mobility, the educational institutions in Guyana also became sites for racial competition and conflict.

Although the PNC espoused socialism which embraced the notion of equalitarianism or equality of opportunities particularly in the field of education, there were some kindergarten, primary and secondary schools catering exclusively for the children of middle and upper classes and party officials and supporters. For example, the President College was highly selective in its intake, recruiting students only from the top 2% of those who wrote the SSEE. This was an attempt to create a new elite in the society. It was a repeat of the historical beginning of Queen's College which was intended to serve as a preparatory school for the sons of the then ruling class to enter university or high status jobs locally to the exclusion of other students. At the other secondary schools, children of party supporters gained entry into the senior or higher quality secondary schools without having the required marks at the Secondary Schools Entrance examinations (Mirror: August 5,1987). These prestigious schools offered an academic curriculum in comparison to the non-prestigious ones which were more or less vocationally oriented.

These structured inequalities and discrimination at the societal level, as well as within the school system, made education in post independence Guyana, a means of perpetuating the social relations that existed in the colonial period and supporting the undemocratic and authoritarian regime of the Burnham Government. It would seem that, while post independence rulers have been different in race or colour, their outlook tends to be influenced still by their colonial past. The Guyanese rulers did not want to change the dominant/subordinate relationships in their society. Therefore, the curriculum used in the schools failed to develop in students the knowledge, skills, attitudes and dispositions needed for a more democratic social order. The State's intervention in determining the content of the curriculum and the educational system in general, provided it with a mechanism to help legitimize the unpopular PNC

Government and to assist it to hold on to political power. Finally, the efforts at preparing the population to make a more effective contribution to the economy also failed for many reasons such as the poor quality of education provided in the schools, the loss of highly trained personnel who were anxious to migrate from an authoritarian political regime and the failure of the economy to provide jobs for those who were emerging with a fairly sound education despite the inefficiencies of the system.

The next chapter discusses the research design for the field work and the various techniques used to collect data for this study.

# CHAPTER 5

# RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

## Introduction

Essentially, the purpose of the field work component of the research was to seek answers to how teachers in the Guyanese school system and others in the education system and the society saw the curriculum development process adopted by the Government and to get some insights into the part teachers played in its implementation. Another aim was to collect secondary source data which were only available inside the country. Before describing the research design of this thesis, it is useful to provide a brief note on the researcher.

The researcher is an Indo-Guyanese who taught at primary and secondary schools and also at the University of Guyana and the Critchlow Labour College. By being a native of Guyana, a keen observer of the socio-political and economic developments of the society and a participant of the educational system for over twenty years, some of the educational policies and developments including curriculum reforms had been a part and parcel of his reality or experiences. This prompted the researcher to investigate curriculum changes in the primary and secondary schools under the PNC Government to determine what were some of the goals of these changes and how they were implemented.

However it should be made very clear that, the researcher treated this research as an academic exercise and he tried to be as objective as he could possibly be in collecting, interpreting and analyzing the data and making generalizations or conclusions.

## Collection of Secondary Source Data

This research relied on documentary sources of information. The documentary sources, located mainly in Guyana and at the University of Alberta, were in the form of official documents such as Government policies, programmes dealing with education, Annual Education Reports, educational statistics, Annual Government Reports, Bank of Guyana Annual reports, budget speeches, IDB and World Bank Reports, UNESCO Reports. In addition, books, magazines, journals, newspapers and scholarly articles, theses and published materials by the Caribbean Examination Council had been sorted out and interpreted within the framework of the study.

It was quite surprising to the researcher that the system of record keeping was very poor in the country. Valuable documents such as curriculum guides in 1967 could not be located, as were documents on the guidance program, metrication etc, even at the Curriculum Development Centre.

In fact, the national archives was in a deplorable state as vital documents were destroyed because of the inoperative air conditioning system due to frequent electricity shortages. Two other factors tended to contribute to the poor record keeping. Firstly, there were many unqualified and inexperienced individuals doing administrative jobs due to the high turn over rate of personnel (Interview with a senior official of the Public Service Ministry). And those inexperienced individuals promoted to executive positions were quick to point out that they were new and, therefore, could not have given account of past records. Secondly, the storage facilities were poor and old documents were soon dumped or destroyed. In fact, there was no modern technology such as computer or microfiche to store information. Sometimes departments changed locations and in the process, documents were lost or destroyed. For example, since the establishment of the Curriculum Development Centre in 1971, it had changed locations three times.

Since, the research relied heavily on documents, it was a tremendous task with the assistance of a research assistant, to peruse the volumes of documents, including newspapers and to make notes simultaneously. Therefore, in order to reduce the monotony of the exercise and bringing the data collection period to an end, elaborate photocopying was done on those topics considered pertinent to the study. These documents were utilized and/or quoted in the research where necessary.

## Content Analysis

The mass media is an important source of disseminating or communicating information to the public. Although the printed materials are subject to biases based on the perspectives of the reporters and whose interests they serve, the content of published materials has been utilized by researchers seeking information on particular issues. In recent times, content analysis has added a new feature to the exploration of communication content for research purposes. Berelson (1952:256) for instance, defines content analysis as "a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication." In other words, such analysis represents a logical technique for making inferences by systematic and objective analysis identifying special characteristics of messages. According to this approach, the researcher examines the messages/communications or printed materials to identify the dimensions/themes/data that seem meaningful for the research questions.

This technique appears to be less problematic in comparison with the interview or questionnaire techniques where the researcher has to solicit the cooperation and responses of the "subjects". Indeed, it was safer in the Guyanese context as interviewees/respondents were suspicious and fearful of giving information - attitudes which have been characteristic of the Guyanese political culture.

Content analysis was conducted on reports on education and the curriculum in national newspapers and news-sheets from January to March 1991 at the National Library in Georgetown and the library at the University of Guyana. But during this period, every day was not devoted entirely to this activity as the researcher had to interview education and other Government officials. No sampling of the newspapers and newsletters was done since there were few in the country. Moveover, not all issues dealt with education. The views of both the Government and opposition groups were analyzed according to their concern with the issue under examination.

The printed materials included the Chronicle ( a national newspaper printed daily and owned by the Government), Mirror and Thunder (both PPP publications, the former is a weekly newspaper while the latter is a half-yearly magazine), Catholic Standard (a weekly newsprint of the Catholic Church), Stabroek News (a professed "neutral" national newspaper printed thrice per week), and the Caribbean Contact (a monthly regional newspaper published by the Caribbean Conference of Churches), Annual Government Reports and other reports from various organizations.

For each newspaper, newsletter and other official documents, there was a labelled file ie. one for the Chronicle, Mirror, Stabroek News, Caribbean Contact, World Bank etc. With the help of a research assistant, the various sources of materials were perused and those reports which were considered pertinent to the study were either copied fully, summarized or photocopied. This activity was largely dependent upon the length of the reports. For instance, the short reports were copied fully, while the long ones were photocopied. In terms of making summaries, care was taken not to deviate from the original reports.

The researcher and the research assistant dealt with separate newspapers, newsletters or official documents, but there was much collaboration. At the end of each day, the notes and materials for photocopying were compared to avoid repetition of the content taken from different sources and they were kept in their respective files. After each week's collection, the researcher shifted through the materials in each file and those that were found to be of less importance, were put into another file, labelled, "miscellaneous". It is important to note that this file was not destroyed.

During the process of analyzing the content of the materials, extreme care was taken to correctly cite the documents, dates of publication and pages from which the materials were taken. This was of tremendous help in citing the materials in the thesis. It is important to note however that, all the materials collected were not fully utilized in the thesis. This was largely due to the fact that the researcher had to use his "discretion" or "judgement" and most importantly his "objectivity" in selecting the most "appropriate" content or material to support his line of arguments.

## Primary Source Data

In addition to secondary source data, primary data was collected from a sample of individuals who had a key role to play in developing and implementing curriculum in the primary and secondary schools in Guyana. This took the form of questionnaires for teachers in the school system and informal or focused interviews with education and other Government officials. The purpose was to elicit the diverse views of the respondents and at the same time to supplement the secondary source data which would be incorporated in the presentation of the findings and not analyzed separately.

The questionnaires consisted of both closed and open ended questions and designed to obtain primary source data on the following topics:

a) Demographic characteristics of the respondents.

b) Attitudes of respondents on individuals designing the curriculum.

c) Pedagogical skills and skills evaluated.

d) Perceptions on the goals of curriculum reforms.

e) Perceptions on curriculum in relation to employment and economic development.

f) Factors inhibiting or aiding curriculum reforms.

While the closed ended questions provided mainly quantitative data, the open-ended ones were aimed at getting qualitative data. Similarly, the informal interviews provided data of a qualitative type. In other words, both qualitative and quantitative data were collected and utilized. Described by Van Maanen, qualitative research method is

> an umbrella term covering an array of interpretive techniques which seek to describe, decode, translate and otherwise come to terms with the meaning, not the frequency, of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomenon in the social world (Van Maanen: 1983:15).

Although qualitative and quantitative studies are not mutually exclusive, they are different at least in form, focus and emphasis of study. Advocates of qualitative research argue that, since human behaviour is significantly influenced by the setting in which it occurs (Bogdan & Biklen: 1982), it is essential for the researcher to penetrate the social world of those who are being researched in order to understand the meaning which these subjects give to various phenomena and their perceptions of their operative situation as well as their ability to transform that situation. However, this is not to suggest that qualitative research is an alternative, or even opposite to quantitative research. Rather, there is a complementarity between the two approaches, as pointed out by Firestone,

> Quantitative and qualitative studies are not antithetical. They present the researcher with different kinds of information and can be used to triangulate to gain greater confidence in one's conclusion. (Firestone: 1987:31)

Informal interviews were conducted with officials dealing directly with education as well as with Government officials in other Ministries and Departments. These interviews varied from a period ranging from twenty to seventy five minutes and were largely dependent upon the availability and cooperation of the interviewees. Some interviews were even shorter than twenty minutes.

The schedule of the interviews of educational personnel in the Ministry of Education is as follows:

| DESIGNATION | DATE | TIME |
|---|---|---|
| Permanent Secretary (act) | 1991-03-12 | 1.00- 1.30 pm |
| Chief Education Officer (act) | 1991-01-09 | 10.00-10.45 am |
| Co-ordinator CHS | 1991-01-14 | 9.00- 9.30 am |
| Chief Planning Officer | 1990-11-15 | 9.30-10.00 am |
| District Education Officer | 1990-11-28 | 11.00-11.55 am |
| District Education Supervisor | 1990-11-28 | 10.00-10.45 am |
| Director NCERD | 1991-10-15 | 8.30- 8.45 am |
| Co-ordinator Work Study | 1991-02-05 | 11.00-11.50 am |
| Director CDC | 1990-11-21 | 10.00-11.30 am |
| Subject Specialists - one session | | |
| a) Language Arts<br>b) Mathematics<br>c) Social Studies<br>d) Science | 1990-12-05 | 9.30-11.50 am |
| Superintendent of Examinations | 1991-01-15 | 9.00- 9.25 am |
| Principal TTC | 1991-01-23 | 9.00- 9.15 am |
| Deputy Principal TTC | 1991-01-23 | 9.20-10.00 am |
| Senior Staff TTC | 1991-01-23 | 10.10-11.15 am |
| Senior Education Personnel Caricom Secretariat | 1990-12-14 | 9.30-10.00 am |

The schedule of the interviews of Government officials from other Ministries and Departments is as follows:

| DESIGNATION | DATE | TIME |
|---|---|---|
| Senior Economist (Ministry of Finance) | 1991-02-07 | 1.00- 1.30 pm |
| Senior Statistician (Statistical Bureau) | 1991-02-12 | 1.30- 2.00 pm |
| Senior Labour Officer (Ministry of Labour and Manpower) | 1991-01-28 | 9.00-10.15 am |
| Senior Planning Officer (State Planning Secretariat) | 1990-12-18 | 9.00-11.00 am |
| Permanent Secretary PSM | 1991-01-07 | 10.00-10.20 am |
| Training Officer PSM | 1991-01-24 | 2.00- 2.30 pm |

The purpose of these informal interviews with officials outside the field of education was to determine the extent to which education was incorporated into the program of national development, especially where training and manpower requirements were concerned.

The informal interviews with the officials did not follow a strict question and answer format. Rather, in the style suggested by Freire (1970) and Mishler (1986), people were engaged in conversations in order to discover "themal coherence, or how utterances express a speaker's recurrent assumptions, beliefs and goals or cognitive world" (Mishler: 1986:89). What resulted from the interviews, therefore, was a collaboration of jointly constructed meanings by the interviewer and respondents. These informal interviews as mentioned before provided qualitative data.

## Sampling

According to W.M. Harper (1971:141), "A random sample is a sample selected in such a way that every item in the population has an equal chance of being included". However, the sample selected for this study was not a random type in the strict sense described by Harper. It was a combination of the purposive and random sampling.

The sample was purposive in two ways. Firstly, the teachers were stratified into two major categories, (a) the administrative staff consisting the heads, deputies, senior teachers and heads of department and (b) the regular teaching staff. Secondly, the schools were stratified into primary and secondary which was further stratified into "top quality" primary (Stella Maris, St. Margaret's, St. Gabriel's, Sacred Heart and St. Agnes) and the general primary, while at the secondary level, the schools were stratified into Senior Secondary Schools (Queen's College, Bishops, St. Stanislaus, St. Roses) and the general secondary including the secondary departments of primary schools, Multilateral and Community High Schools. It is important to note that, primary schools were classified as "top quality" because they have more qualified teachers and better facilities and were judged to be "top quality" by the number of passes at the Secondary Schools Entrance Examination. Also, the senior secondary schools have both a regular 5 year program along with a two years advanced study programs for the GCE "A" level examination which meet British university entrance requirements.

Although the schools were selected on a purposive sampling technique, no random sampling was made of those schools in each of the categories. This was avoided because the "top quality" primary and the senior secondary schools were few in comparison with the general primary and secondary schools. For instance, in Georgetown, there are 42 primary schools of which 5 can be classified as "top quality" and 24 secondary schools of which 4 are senior secondary schools. 14 primary schools were selected including the 5 "top quality" ones; 16 secondary schools were selected, including the 4 senior secondary schools, 8 general secondary schools and 4 Community High Schools. Since there were 9 "top quality" primary and senior secondary schools in Georgetown, all were selected.

However, at each school, a random approach was used in selecting the respondents, but this was determined largely upon the size of the staff at each school. For example, those schools such as Tutorial High, St. Winifride's Primary and Campbellville Community High which had less than 12 staff members, only three individuals were selected, one from the administrative staff and two from the regular teaching staff. For those schools that had over 25 staff members, 5 respondents were selected - 2 from the administrative and 3 from the regular teaching staff. The names of the teachers in each category were put into two separate boxes and shaken up and a teacher in each of the selected schools was requested to draw out the appropriate number of respondents from the boxes. By this method, 100 teachers in the two categories were selected. Such a total was arbitrarily arrived at, but it was considered useful and easily manageable in the computation of percentages.

In arriving at this number, consideration was also given to the lack of resources such as finance, time and research personnel. Although one may argue that a larger sample size would decrease the sampling error and tend to increase the reliability and validity of the research, it is the researcher's conviction that a larger sample size will only repeat or confirm the values of the one hundred respondents.

### Sample Characteristics

A description of the characteristics of the 100 respondents would provide insights into the multi-variables and multi-attributes of the sample. The sample statistics showed that there were 40 administrative staff and 60 practising teachers from all the categories of primary and secondary schools. 46 teachers were from the primary schools and 54 were from the secondary schools. At the primary level, 23 were from the "top" schools and 23 were from the general primary; and at the secondary level, there were 18 teachers from the senior high schools and 36 from the general secondary schools. This meant that 41 teachers were selected from the "top" primary and senior secondary schools, while 59 were selected from the general primary and secondary schools. Further, there were 34 males and 66 females - probably a reflection of the male:female ratio in the profession. There were 83 teachers between the ages of 31 and 50 years, 3 were between 20 and 25 years, 5 between 26 and 30 years, 7 between 51 and 55 years and 2 over 55 years. The two teachers over 55 years in the sample, were probably teachers who were re-hired because of the shortage of teaching personnel, as it is statutory that public servants, including teachers, are eligible to retire at age 55.

There were 94 certified teachers i.e they had 2 to 3 years of specialized training at the Teacher Training Complex, 36 had degrees and 7 had Diplomas in Education from the University of Guyana. In other words, all the teachers in the sample can be classified as "qualified" teachers. 89 teachers had between 10 to over 15 years of teaching experience, while 11 had less than 10 years. In total, 60 teachers had over 15 years of teaching experiences.

The ethnic composition of the sample revealed that 37 teachers were Indo-Guyanese, 46 Afro-Guyanese and 17 in the "other" ethnic categories such as Mixed, Amerindians, Chinese and Portuguese. The number of Indo-Guyanese might be slightly over represented in the Georgetown. Nevertheless, it did give a rough indication of the proportion of Indo-Guyanese to Afro-Guyanese teachers in city. Although all the teachers in the sample were from the Capital City of Georgetown, there were 63 teachers who were born in the rural areas as compared with 37 born in the city. However, there were 11 teachers in the sample who grew up in the city.

The sample covered teachers who had been exposed to both the rural and urban settings, and therefore, such experiences along with their length of time spent in the teaching profession and their academic standing were valuable, since they made a useful contribution to the quality of the responses. It is important to note that unqualified, inexperienced, temporary and part-time teachers were not included in the study. Also, the importance of stratifying the sample was intended to make it possible for the identification of independent variables which could have assisted in throwing light on the variations in the responses to the various questions.

## Procedure for and Problems in Obtaining Data

A formal letter requesting permission to conduct the study in the Primary and Secondary schools in Georgetown had to be approved by the Chief Education Officer (CEO). Included in the letter was a brief description of the nature and the purpose of the study. The permission was granted one week after the request was made. A similar letter was later needed by the Permanent Secretary of the Public Service Ministry before interviews could be conducted with the Training Officer and other officials in the Ministry, and permission granted for having access to documents such as annual reports, scholarships and training programs locally and overseas. This permission was granted three weeks after the request was made.

Upon the granting of the permission from the CEO, visits were made to the schools in Georgetown. The intention of the researcher was to interview the administrative staff and the practising teachers, but this was quite impractical because most of the teachers who were selected in the sample were busily engaged in teaching or other school activities, whenever schools were visited. The questionnaires were therefore left during the week of October 30, to November 3, 1990, with the head-teachers or any other administrative staff by the researcher to be distributed to the selected teachers after he briefed them about the nature and purpose of the research. At the same time, a date was fixed to collect them one week later.

Like all anxious researchers, it was anticipated by the researcher that the questionnaires be filled and collected the following week after the date of delivery. But to his dismay, this exercise took over six weeks ie. from November 6 to December 15, 1990, to complete after consistent recalls were made at the "defaulting" schools. The primary school teachers were more cooperative in the sense that they finished the exercise faster than the secondary school teachers. Further, five secondary school teachers in different secondary schools refused to fill the questionnaire, but they were replaced by others selected randomly.

One of the recurrent complaints of the teachers was that, the open-ended questions appeared to be difficult and it made them think a lot before responding to the questions. This was largely due to the fact that the questionnaires were not pre-tested. Had this been done, the questions would have been modified or made simpler so as to get rid of any ambiguous concepts or unclear questions. Another factor for such complaints was that, the researcher was not on spot to respond to the difficulties teachers encountered in answering the questions. If interviews had been conducted, this major problem could have been surmounted. However, from the comments of teachers, the questionnaires provided them with a better understanding of their roles as teachers and most importantly, of the planning and implementation of curriculum reforms.

The informal interviews with Government officials inside and outside the Ministry of Education were very time consuming. It was a tiresome task to make appointments to speak with these officials and much frustration was experienced when an appointment which was confirmed, was cancelled because the officer was not in office or was engaged at a meeting. Sometimes in the midst of an interview, an official might terminate the interview for another appointment or was perhaps trying to evade the researcher. This happened frequently among bureaucrats in the ministries. But because of the researcher's persistence, interviews were conducted with these officials, after which, it was expected that the researcher invited the officials for lunch in gratitude for information received. On these occasions, the officials appeared to be less tense to discuss issues or to divulge information which they regarded as being of a more "delicate" nature.

## Data Source

The teachers in the sample provided primary source data on their perceptions of the rationale and goals of curriculum reforms, their views on the planning process, factors to be considered in the planning of curriculum, factors aiding or problems encountered with the implementation of curriculum reforms, their teaching styles and the skills which they evaluated. In addition, discussions were held with head teachers and other staff members, whenever it was convenient. The information from the teachers gave a realistic picture of what was happening in the implementation process as opposed to the Government's reports on the success of the project.

Those officials from the Ministry of Education provided general information on the structure and goals of primary and secondary education, including the Community High School Program, the National Service and Mass Games activities as these affected the schools and suggested ways on how these might be improved. From the Ministry of Education, important documents on education, UNESCO Reports and researches on education, were obtained.

The staff at the Curriculum Development Centre provided very useful background information on the objectives of the centre, the process of translating governmental goals into curriculum documents, the interaction between the Teacher's Training Colleges and schools in terms of planning and evaluating old and new programs and problems encountered in the process, the mounting of training seminars familiarizing teachers with new programs and the designing of local examinations. The staff at the Centre also supplied documents on curriculum guides which were sent out to schools to be implemented.

The Annual Digest of Educational Statistics prepared by the Planning Unit of the Ministry of Education provided information on the enrolment and graduation patterns and drop-out rates of students at the various levels of education along with the recruitment and loss of staff, financial allocation at the various levels and examination results, locally and internationally.

Personnel from the Teacher's Training Complex were contacted to solicit information on the type of training offered - programs and curriculum - enrolment and graduate patterns, problems associated with teacher training. Their candid statements challenged most of the "problem free" account of teacher training.

Various documents on the IDB and World Bank Reports were obtained from the State Planning Secretariat. The Secretariat also provided data on manpower planning and development, employment patterns and other socio-economic statistics. Data on local and overseas training at the post secondary levels, including post graduate studies sponsored by the Government of Guyana and other international funding agencies, were obtained from the Training Division of the Public Service Ministry. In addition, the Education Unit of the Caribbean Commonwealth Secretariat in Georgetown provided documentation on the history, progress, rationale, goals and policies, annual reports and general perception of the CXC.

## Data Analysis Plan

Data analysis involves the process of

> working with data, organizing it, breaking it into manageable units, synthesize it, searching for patterns, discovering what is important, what is to be learned and describing what you will tell others (Bogdan and Bilken: 1982:145).

This process should be conducted in such a manner that it summarizes the observations that will yield answers to the research questions. Generally, the purpose of interpreting data is to search for the broader meaning of the answers by linking them to other available knowledge.

This research entailed a variety of techniques to obtain data and therefore the process of triangulation was a key method used in analyzing the data. According to Denzin (1978) triangulation is described as the "combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon" He contends that

> multiple methods should be used in every investigation, since no (single) method can ever completely reveal all the relevant features of empirical reality necessary for the testing or developing a theory (Denzin: 1978:28).

Triangulation, however, is not limited to the use of data. According to Denzin (1978), it can involve a variety of observers or investigators, theorists or perspectives, and methodologies, all in the pursuit of addressing the same theoretical question. In general, it is assumed that multiple methods increase the accuracy of the research findings (Jick: 1979). In supporting the use of triangulation, Jick suggested that, this research strategy

> can be something other than scaling, reliability, and convergent validation. It can also capture a more complete, holistic and contextual portrayal of the unit(s) under study. That is, beyond the analysis of overlapping variance, the use of multiple measures may also uncover some unique variance which otherwise may

> have been neglected by simple methods. It is here that qualitative methods, in particular, can play an especially prominent role by eliciting data and suggesting conclusions to which others methods would be blind. Elements of the context are illuminated. In this sense, triangulation may be used not only to examine the same phenomenon from multiple perspectives, but also enrich our understanding by allowing for new deeper dimensions to emerge (Jick: 1979:603-604)

Furthermore, he identified the use of triangulation on the basis of the opportunities it provides to the researcher which are as follows:

a) achieve higher level of confidence in the results;

b) stimulate the creation of inventive methods of data collection and analysis;

c) uncover the deviant dimension of a phenomenon;

d) enrich explanation of the research results, and

e) serve as a critical test for competing theories (Jick: 1979).

On the other hand, he identified three main limitations of this method of which the researcher should be aware and these are:

a) reapplication is difficult;

b) the strategy may not be suitable to all research purposes; and

c) funding and time constraints may prevent its effectiveness (Jick: 1979).

In this study, triangulation of the various data sources was employed in order to ensure that the different perspectives were represented as accurately as possible and for the researcher to obtain a thorough understanding of the issues under study.

The questionnaires were coded by the researcher and with the assistance of the SPSS computer package and the Department of Education Research Services at the University of Alberta, the data were computed and analyzed. The reader's attention should be drawn to the fact that, throughout the analysis of the data, the percentages of the frequencies as an analytical statistic were used. The reason for the using percentages was that they were simple to use. They tell us more or less the same things as other statistics information would and they highlight the various relationships in terms of the problem being studied, quite clearly.

Different types of information were gathered by means of the techniques described above. Each type, though related to the other, required its own analysis. Therefore, a structure was established to avoid the clustering of different data set. Each presentation of data was followed by a discussion of that data set. Moreover, the presentations were divided into sections in the analytical chapter according to the closeness of their links.

## Delimitations

This study was limited mainly to the analysis of curriculum changes in the primary and secondary schools in Guyana during the period 1965 to 1985. In other words, the focus of analysis was on the post-independence or Burnham era.

The study was mainly confined to the city of Georgetown and its environs where most of the ministries, educational departments, documents, key education personnel, libraries and the archives, were located. Nevertheless, this geographic parameter did not in any way influence the intent of the study.

## Limitations

A study of this magnitude requires more time for the researcher to obtain a deeper insight into the problem under investigation. For instance, because of time constraint, no ethnographic or indepth classroom studies were made to observe the relationship between "curriculum as planned and curriculum in use". Further, on account of limited time, financial constraints and inadequate personnel, the efforts to solicit the perceptions and views of the rural teachers and population were abandoned. Therefore, no comparisons were made between rural and urban respondents. Nevertheless, the local newspapers, by providing an avenue for Guyanese including rural folks to express their concerns on educational issues, were utilized to overcome such deficiency. The next chapter analyses the data collected during the fieldwork.

# CHAPTER 6

# THE FINDINGS OF THE FIELD RESEARCH ON CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT DURING THE BURNHAM ERA

## Introduction

During the Burnham regime, the Ministry of education officially stated that the curriculum of schools at all levels should reflect both societal and individual needs. Cecilene Baird, the then Minister of Education in addressing a conference of teacher's education in 1972 emphasized

> We cannot afford to ignore the essential linkage between education, economic and social development, between the growth and welfare of the individual and the growth and welfare of the national society. (A Review of the Educational System 1976-1985: 1985:2)

In other words, the curriculum should bear some relationship to the character and aims of the State that were determined largely by the economic, political and social conditions prevailing in the society.

However in Guyana, the needs of the individual and the society were for the most part largely determined by the State. This was evident in the educational policies pursued from the 1970s which were designed to reflect national goals. Foremost among these, was the intention of the Government to transform the Guyanese society to a socialist one. The new objectives of the educational system as perceived by the Ministry of Education and the PNC Government were stated as follows:

1. The creation of teaching environments which would develop a feeling of self worth in individuals and promote harmonious interpersonal relationships.
2. The inculcation of patterns of human behaviour which support the strategies determined for national development.
3. The provision of academic training relevant to the wide range of occupational skills necessary for the economic and social development of Guyana.
4. The orientation of the school population to occupations relating to the three major goals of feeding, clothing and housing the nation, and to other relevant areas.
5. The involvement of the school population in community schemes which identify job opportunities and job needs in the rural, urban and hinterland areas in which they live.
6. The provision of skills which prepare young people for self-employment in accordance with their skills and interests, and the observed needs of particular communities.
7. The development of an awareness and appreciation of the socio-cultural contribution of Guyanese to the creation of a national identity.
   (A Review Of The Education System: Policies, Structures And Mechanisms 1976-1985: March 1985:3. A Report Prepared by the Ministry of Education).

Implicit in these objectives was that, the education system would pass on the knowledge and develop in students the appropriate skills to meet the nation's socio-economic needs as defined by the PNC Government. The rationale for restructuring the educational system and reforming the curriculum in particular, was to prepare students to be functional for the effective performance of adult roles as workers and citizens in the socialist society which the Government claimed that it was creating.

The staff at the Curriculum Development Centre were therefore mandated to restructure the educational programs with a view of incorporating the national goals as enunciated by the Government in power. Emerging from their efforts, was a curriculum document which reflected the combination of national goals and educational objectives along with the activities which were to be undertaken in various subject areas in the primary and lower forms of the secondary schools.

The main focus of this chapter, will be to describe the curriculum development process as perceived by practising teachers and school administrators. Both groups of teachers were very crucial in curriculum implementation since in the last resort they were ultimately responsible for carrying out the task of curriculum reforms. Teachers' views which were collected through the use of questionnaire will be summarized here. But the use of intensive statistical analysis would not be a feature of the presentation because the study was focused on describing the process of change, not on establishing statistical reality for the different practices. The non-random choice of schools and Government officials was a reflection of this approach.

This research was hoping to examine whether the responses by the teachers pertaining to the implementation of curriculum in Guyana during the Burnham years, varied according to their gender, ethnicity, school level (elementary vs. secondary), and the type of school (elite elementary, general elementary, senior secondary and general secondary). However, a visual examination of the data indicated that these factors did not in any significant way influence the kinds of responses made by teachers.

Statistical tests of Chi-Square were utilized simply to determine whether or not these variables had an influence on teachers' responses. However, the Chi-Square tests were to some extent, inappropriate for this analysis because there were many cells with less than five (5) expected frequencies in tables where the rows and columns were greater than two (2). This was to a large extent due to the limited size of the sample. Furthermore, the purpose was to get an understanding of the process that was occurring, not in establishing statistical validity for the results. Consequently, the percentages of frequency would be used in the analysis.

## Attitudes of Teachers on Curriculum Development

The purpose of the first area of interest was to assess whether curriculum development was undertaken by the Ministry of Education/Curriculum Development Unit or whether teachers were involved in the process. Further, it was assumed that, despite the authoritarian nature of the Government, the teachers would be more willing to involve other groups such as parents in the curriculum development process. This could be partly due to a genuine desire to democratize the process or could be a reaction against the way in which the curriculum was being developed under the Burnham regime.

The support by teachers for parents to be involved in the curriculum development process can be seen from the following response to the statement.

Statement: "Parents should be involved in the planning of curriculum for schools".

| Response: | Agree | Disagree | Undecided |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 56.7% (34) | 30% (18) | 13.3% (8) |

But while teachers were willing to allow parents to share in the process, they were less keen to have students involved as can be seen in the response below.

Statement: "Students should be involved in the planning of curriculum".

| Response: | Agree | Disagree | Undecided |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 18.4% (11) | 75% (45) | 6.6% (4) |

This reaction could have partly stemmed from the fact that, teachers might have felt that students were too immature and lacking the experience to assist with such a task. Therefore, it would have been inviting chaos to give them the opportunity to participate in the curriculum development process. In addition, some teachers felt that in the interest of efficiency in the management of schools, they should maintain control rather than the students. Furthermore, some teachers might have even feared that their status, self-respect and authority, especially in the area of social control could be undermined if students should participate in the curriculum development process.

Teachers also seemed to have less faith in the contribution of curriculum specialists in planning and selecting materials for the curriculum and in the Government making decisions as to what was best to be included in the curriculum. In response to the statement "Only curriculum specialists should select materials and plan the curriculum", 55% (33) disagreed while only 28.3% (17) agreed. Further, in response to the statement "The Government should decide what is best to be included in the curriculum", 70% (42) disagreed and only 20% (12) agreed. On the other hand, they felt that teachers who are ultimately responsible for the implementation of curriculum, should be heavily involved in the planning process. Therefore, 85% (51) agreed that the involvement of teachers in the planning of curriculum was important against 13.3% (8) who disagreed.

This attitude was possibly a reflection of the fact that, their involvement in curriculum was minimal and in some cases non-existent and they probably felt that since they were the ones who were involved in the implementation process, then they should be the foremost in deciding what should be incorporated into the curriculum. The need for teachers to feel a definite sense of ownership towards input in all aspects and at all stages of the curriculum planning and development process is recognized since with such an approach what is designed and developed would be more likely to be implemented by them.

But this would have been in conflict with the efforts of an authoritarian Government which had as its main objective the use of education to achieve its own political goals. Hence, when asked who were mainly responsible for the development of curriculum for the schools in Guyana, 78.3% (47) of the teachers mentioned that it was the curriculum personnel, subject specialists and research officers attached to the Curriculum Development Centre of the Ministry of Education. Another 13.3% (8) mentioned Teacher Educators in the Ministry of Education, Lecturers in the Faculty of Education at the University of Guyana and the Teacher's Training Colleges, and only 8.3% (5) said classroom teachers. This meant that 91.6% (55) of those involved in curriculum development were seen to be individuals outside the classroom situation and were direct or indirect supporters of the Government.

It is also likely that many of those who made up the 8.3% of teachers who might have been involved in the curriculum development process, were those teachers who had been specially seconded on a temporary basis by the Ministry of Education to the Curriculum Development Centre to help with its activities or were specialist teachers at the secondary level who might be called upon, periodically, to prepare resource materials for the CXC examinations.

An informal discussion with the Director of the Curriculum Development Centre further confirmed the point about the lack of teachers' involvement in the curriculum development process. In an interview with the Director, it was revealed that, the only contribution practising teachers made in the process of curriculum planning, was to test and retest curriculum materials produced by the staff at the Curriculum Development Centre. The teachers were simply used to assess whether the matter or content of the specialized subject area was suitable or appropriate to the achievement level of students in different grades.

This technical approach to curriculum development was further justified by the Director of the Curriculum Development Centre who pointed out that the Minister of Education who was largely responsible for selecting the Assistant Chief Education Officer (ACEO) Planning and Permanent Secretary, was the representative of the people and hence, responsible for the actions of the Unit. Therefore, any deliberations on education in Parliament were conveyed to the Curriculum Development Centre by the ACEO, Planning, who assigned responsibilities for developing the policies which guided the work of the curriculum specialists. The Director admitted that, by this approach whatever was planned in the curriculum was a reflection of what the Government wanted them to do. In other words, the staff at the Unit were taking orders from the political directorates as to their role in the curriculum development process.

To further bring the curriculum planning process under the charge of the State, it was pointed out by the Permanent Secretary of Education that, any policy directives, in terms of new skills/knowledge etc. needed by the students were the result of the Ministry of Education's consultation with the Ministries of Planning and Labour, the National Advisory Council etc. Decisions arrived at by such members as the Chief Education Officer, the Permanent Secretary, the Deputy Chief Education Officer of Planning and the Director of National Council for Education Research and Development and other Government representatives from other ministries, were said to have informed the direction of curriculum policy and planning for implementation. In addition, education officials established curriculum objectives based on the policy directives handed down from the Central Committee or Supreme Congress of the PNC.

The political impact and the dominance of the Government on curriculum issues were manifested in the objectives of the Curriculum Development Centre which was charged with the responsibility for preparing and validating programs for use in the primary and secondary schools. In more specific terms, the Centre was mandated to develop programs that reflected the ideological orientation and the social and economic aspirations of the Government in power. When the curriculum became a policy document, it was finally sanctioned by the Government and then sent to the schools to be implemented.

Because the curriculum content was virtually dictated by the Government, it was not surprising that a majority of the teachers reacted negatively to the process and felt that they should have a major role to play in the planning of the curriculum for Guyanese children. But, this would have run contrary to the *modus operandi* of an authoritarian Government.

The teachers were however, in agreement that the political, economic and socio-cultural factors were very important in the curriculum development process. For instance, 83.3% (50) were in agreement that the political realities must be reflected in the curriculum, 96.7% (58) agreed on the importance of the socio-cultural factors and of most significance, all (60) agreed on the importance of the economic factor.

Despite their recognition of the importance of these variables, 61.7% (37) of the teachers felt that some of the subjects (these were not mentioned) in the curriculum were used as a means of political indoctrination. The percentages of teachers who indicated that various curriculum subjects reflected the goals of the political party in power can be seen in Table 6.1.

**TABLE 6.1 CURRICULUM SUBJECTS WHICH REFLECTED THE GOALS OF THE PNC GOVERNMENT AS PERCEIVED BY PRACTISING TEACHERS.**

| SUBJECT AREAS | % OF TEACHERS INDICATING THESE SUBJECTS REFLECTED THE GOALS OF THE PARTY IN POWER |
|---|---|
| Social Studies | 90% (54) |
| National Policy | 60% (36) |
| Agriculture | 63% (38) |

The point made was that, these subjects mentioned in Table 6.1, were according to 47% (28) of the teachers, used to instill a sense of commitment to the national goals, policies/objectives and ideology of the political party in power. Another 58.3% (35) of the teachers said these subjects were used as an attempt to orient, socialize or indoctrinate students to the values of projects and programs undertaken by the Government and tried to glorify personalities of the ruling party. Further, 66.7% (40) of the teachers disagreed that the curriculum reforms from 1965 to 1985 assisted the students to acquire knowledge, skills and dispositions for the economic development process. One can therefore conclude that, teachers were aware of the various subjects which were used largely as a means of political socialization and/or indoctrination of the future population to the views of the party in power.

While teachers acknowledged the importance of the political, economic and socio-cultural factors in the planning of the curriculum, they were fairly apprehensive about the focus of the curriculum content which often tended to be used largely for partisan political socialization. Political socialization is an important function of the curriculum in all societies, but it is the politically partisan nature in which it was used in the Guyanese context about which teachers were skeptical. For example, in the series, "A Primer for Young Patriot: Book One and Two", there are a number of questions and answers which the young had to learn and practise. Among these are:

Question: "What rights do all Guyanese share ?" (Book One: 1974:32)

Answer: "We share the right to learn the things we need to know to help build our country".

Question: "What duties all Guyanese share ?" (Book One: 1974:33)

Answer: "All Guyanese share the duties to grow and make the things Guyana and her people need; to use the things made in Guyana by the Guyanese people".

Question: "What do I mean when I say I will be loyal to Guyana ?" (Book One: 1974:16)

Answer: "I will always study and work hard in school so that I will learn those things I can use to help build Guyana".

Question: "How can we show that we love Guyana and are loyal

Guyanese ?" (Book Two: 1974:34-35)

Answer: "We must respect our leaders -- the President, the Prime Minister and all other persons whom we elect to serve us. We must be prepared to fulfil our duties as loyal Guyanese".

The words of school pledge and motto were also politically focused to inculcate support for the PNC Government. They were as follows: "We respect authority. We demonstrate our loyalty and patriotism. I will obey the rules of my school and be regular, punctual, and honest and polite as I prepare to serve my country". (Quotes taken from a few schools during the field work)

In addition to this political catechism, the examination conducted by the Ministry of Education tended to reflect this same focus on political indoctrination. A few questions at the Secondary School Entrance Examination will be worth quoting.

Examination Questions:

1) Cde. LFS Burnham supported ALL of the following EXCEPT:

a) Caribbean Unity.
b) Non-alignment.
c) Apartheid.
d) Socialism.
e) Democracy.

2) Choose the FALSE statement about the socialist system of government in Guyana:

a) Foreigners own and control all the business places.
b) The means of production are controlled by the citizens.
c) All the citizens share in surplus made by the country.

d) The state owns and controls the natural resources.
e) Every citizen is treated in the same way.

3) Most of the foreign-owned companies in Guyana were nationalized mainly because:

a) Nationalization was the popular thing to do.
b) More Guyanese would get work.
c) The owners asked the government to nationalize them
d) The owners were leaving the country.
e) Excess earnings would remain in the country.
(Stabroek News: Saturday March 12, 1988:7)

In addition to the political socialization which occurred among students, teachers undergoing training were also exposed to some form of political indoctrination by having to do their stint of National Service. Further, the focus on political re-education could be observed from some of the goals provided in their training. For instance, some of the objectives of the teacher's training colleges were:

- be interpreters of national goals and objectives;
- develop an awareness of themselves as a developer in society;
- develop an awareness of their role and functions in national development;
- enable teacher trainees to interpret school activities in terms of the National Philosophy;
- bring about in trainees desirable changes in attitudes, knowledge and skills and in particular to develop in them an awareness of the role of the school in the Cooperative Republic of Guyana;
- to foster awareness, growth and commitment concomitant with national goals,
- to help teachers acquire knowledge of the principle of co-operative socialism,
- to enable teachers to learn and to demonstrate the qualities of self reliance, self discipline, commitment and loyalty, (K. P. Binda: 1986: Appendix 10 i)

The preparation of the teacher-trainees therefore, began with their being made to acquire an understanding of their mission as defined by the Government and of the nature of the "product" they were expected to mould. The curriculum was largely dictated by the ruling party which wanted to transform the society in accordance with its own ideological preconceptions. The party in power appointed specially selected "professional" curriculum planners and educators to develop the type of curriculum which would equip teacher-trainees with the necessary tools for transmitting a particular conception of society and specific type of skills which were perceived to be "right and proper" for the emergent socialist society as the party officials conceived it.

As a consequence, the curriculum underwent radical changes in consonance with the new philosophical orientation of the PNC. This philosophy was expressed by D. Hoyte (who later became President after the death of Burnham in 1985) at an address to the Guyana Teacher's Association in 1978, when he said

> Education in former times was used as an instrument of division and class prejudice in support of the Capitalist/Imperialist system. Now it must be used as an instrument of true Democracy and a tool for fashioning the Socialist Society. (D. Hoyte: 1978:3)

Hoyte further commented on the role of the teachers in the teacher training program

> For their new roles, teachers themselves must be reoriented towards more meaningful participation as leaders in community affairs, for the social, economic and cultural benefit of the people, no matter where they live in our

country (D. Hoyte: 1978:6).

Nothing was inherently wrong with socializing the populace about the policies of the Government or developing patriotism among its citizens. But in the leadership roles which the teachers were to take in their communities, they were expected to carry out the dictates of the Government as conceived by the PNC officials. Further, since the Government did not gain power by political consensus, it was using the educational institutions and curriculum reforms to build up some form of legitimacy for itself by impressing on the young minds that the Government was concerned about their welfare. Nevertheless, opposition to such coercive measures was becoming pronounced as a result of large numbers of teachers resigning to take jobs in the small private sector or emigrating.

## Factors that Influence Curriculum Development

Because of the centralized nature of education in Guyana, it was unlikely that other sub group factors such as individual, social class, religion, ethnic, gender and geographic/regional were considered important in the planning of the curriculum. To test this assumption, teachers were asked to indicate how they felt about the extent to which the curriculum was meeting the needs of special sub-groups in the society or whether it should reflect only the national concerns as defined by the Government. On this point, 65% (34) of the teachers felt that individual differences should not be considered when the curriculum was being planned. Another 68.8% (41) did not feel that social class differences should be recognized, while 73.3% (44) did not consider religious differences as important. In addition, 71.7% (43) saw no need for the recognition of ethnic differences, while 73.3% (44) did not support the importance of gender differences and 63.3% (38) felt that regional differences were unimportant components to be considered whenever the curriculum is being planned for the schools in Guyana.

Considering the diverse nature of the Guyanese society, one would have thought that teachers would have perceived the importance of such factors as individual, ethnic and regional differences in the designing of the curriculum, but this was not the case. For example, it is erroneous to assume that the lived experiences of the Amerindians residing in the interior or students in the rural area are similar to that of the coastal or urban students. Therefore, there is the need to plan or cater for regional differences.

From these responses, it would seem that the teachers in the sample were either less aware of developments in modern pedagogy which tend to emphasize the individual and group needs of children or had completely accepted the view of the Government which was trying to achieve the national goals which it considered important at the expense of the differences which characterized the society. The lack of recognition of these differences in curriculum planning therefore seemed to suggest that, the curriculum in Guyana was a standardized national policy document which was used by teachers in an inflexible manner with the hope of achieving broad national goals as defined by the party in power. In as much as some teachers might have been inclined to consider these differences within their classroom situation, there were certain factors which prevented this from happening. Overcrowding due to lack of adequate space, lack of facilities, high teacher-student ratio and shortage of competent and qualified teachers were some of the inhibiting factors which made it impossible for any major efforts to be made by teachers in meeting the needs of individuals or sub-groups in the society.

## Views of the Administrative Staff of Schools on the Curriculum Development Process

The Administrative Staff of the schools were also asked to express their opinions on those factors which needed to be considered in the planning of the curriculum. The data showed no difference among the administrators in their opinions concerning the importance of parents' contributions in the process of curriculum planning. For example, 45% (18) of the administrative staff claimed that parents' views were very important while 47.5% (19) did not agree. A similar pattern was observed by the administrative staff of schools on the importance of Government officials at the Ministry of Education, planning the curriculum. For example, 45.5% (18) of the Administrative staff of schools claimed that Government officials were very important, whereas 45% (18) did not consider such individuals as so important. However, there was overwhelming support by the administrative staff of schools for the involvement of students, teachers and curriculum specialists at the Curriculum Development Centre in the planning of the curriculum. This was reflected by 72.5% (29) for students' involvement, 97.5% (39) for teachers' participation and 92.5% (37) support for curriculum specialists.

It would seem that the views of practising teachers were at variance with those of the administrative staff about the importance of involving students, curriculum specialists and Government officials in the curriculum planning process. For example, 75% (45) of the teachers disagreed with students having an input in curriculum planning activities while 72.5% (29) of the administrative felt that students should be given such an opportunity to be involved in the process. There was no explicit reason given for the variation in the response. Since the majority of the school administrators tended to accept the Government policies including "participation in decision-making", although this never happened in reality, it is more likely that they would support in "principle" students' involvement in the curriculum development process. Further, the support for students' involvement might be based on the assumption that the students were more predisposed to accept the policies of the PNC Government.

There was a similar difference in opinion with regard to the views of both groups of teachers on the role of curriculum specialists in the curriculum development process. For instance, 55% (33) of the teachers disagreed that curriculum specialists should plan and select materials for the curriculum, while 92.5% (37) of the administrative staff supported the importance of curriculum specialists in the planning of the curriculum. Furthermore, 70% (42) of the teachers disagreed that the Government should decide what was best to be included in curriculum planning, while 47.5% (19) of the administrative staff viewed the involvement of Government officials as very important in this activity.

The support of administrative staff of schools for the involvement of Government's officials in the planning of curriculum might partly have been due to the fact that, they saw these individuals as being more supportive of the point of view of the Government. Those administrative staff who felt that the Government officials were not important in curriculum planning were likely those who were disenchanted with the Government and its educational policies or they might have been influenced by other philosophical considerations.

The dominance of the role of Government officials in determining the nature of the educational programs in Guyana was also seen in the fact that, 87.5% (35) of the administrative staff of the schools said that most educational programs including curriculum changes were initiated by the Government. Furthermore, 77.5% (31) felt that the officials from the Ministry of Education determined the activities of their schools, especially where curricular and extra-curricular activities were concerned. That was the reason why 82.5% (33) of the administrative staff of schools claimed that neither they nor any other staff members in their schools assisted in the planning of the curriculum. This was done by "agents", specially selected by the Government.

But despite these observations, 67.5% (27) of the administrative staff of schools claimed that the curriculum designed by the Ministry of Education was suited to their particular school situation. This was somewhat surprising because, as indicated earlier, the curriculum was not modified to suit local environments such as urban, rural, riverine etc. In fact, one head-teacher expressed the concern that the curriculum had to be seen as a statement of Government policy and had to be adhered to by all schools irrespective of local conditions.

The data in this research seemed to suggest that the administrative staff of the schools were more predisposed to accept the dominance of the Government and its officials in curriculum development, whereas the practising teachers were not supportive of the massive involvement of these individuals in this process. However, both categories of individuals saw the importance of classroom teachers being involved in influencing the official curriculum because they were considered the group ultimately capable of effectively implementing the curriculum in the classroom.

Considering the control by the Government of Guyana over the educational system - its curriculum, the method of teaching used and the appointments and dismissals of teachers - teachers were in a dilemma about whether they should attend to what many of them perceived to be the needs of the children or succumb to the impositions of a higher authority. It would seem that teachers in Guyana were mere functionaries in the schools and given new programs to teach without any real regard for classroom situations which they faced. The observations of the curriculum planning process indicated before, bear testimony to this. Consequently, alienation resulted among teachers whose loyalty was divided not just between students and regulations, but also, between concrete reality which the children brought into the classrooms and abstract representation of what they should be taught as specified by the "official" curriculum.

This arose in Guyana because teachers were unable to participate fully in the curriculum development process.

Without teachers' input and direction, the end product is likely to fall short of meeting the unique needs of children within particular context. Most educators are of the view that teachers should play a key role in any curriculum development. According to David Pratt (1980) the teacher's input in curriculum development is essential because he/she is an expert in the subject matter, pedagogy, an assessor of learner's needs, insights with knowledge of the teaching/learning situation. Therefore, the process of curriculum building belonged to the grass-roots level and teachers should have ownership of it from the start. Cay put it succinctly by noting that, "curriculum building usually begins in the classroom of a particular teacher, in the genesis of an idea by an individual and its experimental use in the classroom" (Cay: 1966: 51).

Arieh Lewy (1977) found out that the greatest cooperation in implementing curriculum comes from those teachers who have been involved in the process of curriculum development. In the same vein, the best cooperation in adapting, implementing and evaluating a curriculum would likely come from the schools where the teachers participated in the curriculum development process. Lewy (1977:253) went further to observe that "teachers frequently oppose educational programs imposed on them by the central educational authorities". For this reason, Taylor and Richards (1979) valued the school-initiated curriculum over one that originated from outside the school to ensure the cooperation and the involvement of the teachers. Even, if initial efforts in the development of the curriculum were taken by the Ministry of Education, the teachers ought to have been critically involved in the process, making inputs, evaluating it, raising questions and creatively adapting it to their use, if necessary.

There is much intrinsic merit in a teacher's involvement in curriculum work. This process could afford them an opportunity to become informed and better skilled in critical-thinking, more effective in evaluating learning outcomes, developed organizing abilities, communication and research skills, and better professionals as a result. The teachers who had gone through the process of sorting out philosophical issues, determining goals and defining procedures for goal attainment are likely to implement the program in a much more dynamic and spontaneous fashion than those teachers who simply attempted to translate someone else's objectives into action.

The greatest benefit teachers get out of curriculum involvement is the insight and understanding they gain for themselves. Stenhouse (1975) argued that effective curriculum development of the highest quality depended upon the capacity of the teachers to take a research stance to their own teaching - a disposition to examine one's own practice critically and systematically. An introspective teacher is more likely to be an informed teacher.

But the authoritarian State in Guyana abhorred such active participation of teachers in the curriculum development process because it needs to ensure that only the Government's point of view is taken into consideration in the instructional process. This lack of teachers' involvement in the curriculum development process probably helped to contribute to the declining standards of Guyanese education to which attention will be later drawn. Some of the skills which were imparted to the students through the curriculum in Guyana will now be discussed.

## Types of Skills Imparted

One of the basic outcomes of the Government's involvement in curriculum development was that the schools in Guyana during the period under review did not seem to develop rational and independent thought among students. Neither did they foster any degree of intellectual autonomy. What they appeared to have done, was to encourage students to memorize irrelevant information and be passive and obedient rather than being actively engaged in their learning process. The quest for intellectual understanding, curiosity and independent thought was possibly inhibited because of the repressive nature of the society. Freedom in the schools was not permitted because it was incompatible with the values being encouraged by the dominant group in the society.

Despite these issues, a discussion of the kinds of skills which Guyanese teachers indicated that they were imparting to their students, will be attempted. These skills were categorized into the three following groups below, which were themselves derived from questionnaire data provided by teachers.

a) Basic skills which include reading, writing, speaking, spelling, computing, comprehending, listening, memorizing and studying.

b) Advanced skills such as problem solving, inquiring, experimenting, questioning, observing, reasoning /logic, independent thinking, interpreting, discovery, organizing, creative, critical, analytical and research.

c) Social skills- attitude, valuing, self reliance, self confidence, autonomy, decision making, and cooperation.

It is important to point out that, some teachers responded to more than one category of skills. 80% (48) of the teachers indicated that they were attempting to inculcate basic skills in their students, 36.7% (22) claimed to impart social skills and only 30% (18) said that they attempted to impart advanced skills. The lower percentages of teachers imparting social and advanced skills seemed to suggest that Guyanese teachers were more preoccupied with teaching basic skills. This could have possibly stemmed from the fact that, teachers were much more interested in students passing the national and external examinations. They therefore wanted to ensure that students learned or memorized basic facts which were considered very important for their success at the examinations. Further, the teaching of advanced and social skills in an authoritarian State is much more problematic than teaching the basic skills. As a consequence, graduates from the school system probably did not generally acquire in any substantial measure analytical, critical or advanced skills which were of some importance for higher studies or the work place.

## Teaching Style

It was observed in the last section that, the majority of practising teachers were imparting basic skills to their students. However, it is also useful to shed some light on "how" teachers were imparting these skills. In this regard, teachers were asked to state from their experiences and observations, the most dominant teaching style prevailing in their schools. Four categories, derived from questionnaire data provided by teachers, were used to analyze the responses. They were:

a) Chalk and talk.

b) Group method - whatever this method might mean since there was no probing to discover what it entails.

c) Discovery method.

The majority of the teachers (83.3% or 50) claimed that the dominant teaching method in their schools was "chalk and talk", while another 11.1% (7) mentioned the "group method" and only 5.5% (3) said that the "discovery" method was practised in their schools, even though, this last method had been emphasized in education policy documents. Given the authoritarian nature of the State, it is very likely that the discovery method of teaching remained an empty gesture. Furthermore, despite its importance, no respondents mentioned problem-posing and solving among the methods used.

There are two levels at which problem-posing can be considered to be important. First and generally, as a means of developing the power to perceive critically the way people exist in the world and secondly, as a way by which students go beyond depending on information that is given to them.

Brown and Walter (1983), advanced the case that problem-posing is intricately connected with problem-solving. Their paradigm for problem-posing is also a demonstration of the deeper understanding of problem-solving. The general approach is an investigative one with two components. The first component is to discover interesting relationships outside the immediate solution in a given situation, and the other component of this investigative technique is illustrated by the "What-If-Not" strategy. For instance, the inefficiencies in the public transportation can provide reasonable opportunities for students to apply many of the statistical concepts taught in class such as calculating average waiting time for buses and probabilities that seats can be available on a given bus. This exercise can also illuminate the differences between the contrived problem set in the class and those which exist in the real world. In other words, it encourages students to use the knowledge base in different ways. These projects can help to develop in students both a spirit and method of investigation that can be transferred to other aspects of their lives, in particular, and the development of their country, in general. Moreover, through this method students can attain a much broader understanding of and familiarity with the subject matter at hand.

While this method seems very enlightening, two plausible explanations can be advanced for the prevalence of the "chalk and talk" method in Guyanese schools - one was the philosophical issue and the other was the lack of facilities and resources. It seemed that Guyanese teachers were either unaware or did not fully recognize the importance of other teaching methods. In fact, when asked about their philosophical orientation to their method of teaching, the response rate was quite alarming as 70% (42) claimed that they were unaware of any philosophy of teaching. Does this presuppose that there was a lack of educational foundation or philosophy courses at the Teacher's Training Colleges and the University of Guyana ? This does not seem to be the case. But what appeared to be happening was that, teachers after completing their training, did not put into practice what they have learned. For example, some teachers after training quickly abandoned what they were trained to do and gracefully fell into the routine or mundane school activities. In fact, many teachers sought training for job and economic security rather than the intrinsic benefit it was to give to the profession (Interview with Education Officer). This was very much so since there was no follow-up system which was built into the training program for newly graduated teachers to make a valid assessment of implementing what they learned from their training.

In addition, some qualified teachers might have endeavoured to practise what they had learnt, but the authoritative structures within the schools and within the general organization of education in the country did not lend themselves easily to experimentation. Sometimes enthusiastic teachers were admonished by the head-teachers to follow a program of instructions as dictated by the school and the Ministry of Education. Although there is no data or information collected in this study which is pertinent to this point, the researcher's earlier experience in the Guyana education system verified the statement.

In one instance, the researcher recalls a post-graduate student who was arranging seminars and experimenting with new pedagogical approaches such as the Freirian and the phenomenological approach to teaching. Older staff members, along with the administrative staff, criticized the approaches and expressed the view that these new pedagogies were not likely to be effective within the Guyanese school system. In fact, apart from the fear of change, they strongly felt that new teaching methods were only theoretical and good for the purpose of having academic discussions. Their major concern was to ensure that by the end of the week, fort-night, term or school year, the teachers finished the schemes of work or the curriculum as developed by the Government and recorded what had been accomplished in the weekly journals. In fact, 85% of the school administrators encouraged their staff to adhere to the curriculum designed by the Curriculum Development Centre. In short, strong opposition within the schools and within the educational system as a whole deterred any deviations from the "official" curriculum and changes in methodology.

In some cases, the authoritarian structure in schools was so pronounced that teachers had to comply with the dictates of the school administrator. At one of high schools in Georgetown the "Bosses' Law" was observed on the door of the head-teacher's office, which reads as follows:

THE BOSSES' LAW

1. The boss is right.
2. The boss is always right.
3. Even if a subordinate is right, Rule #1 shall apply.
4. The boss does not eat he takes nourishment.
5. The boss does not drink he tastes.
6. The boss does not sleep he rests.
7. The boss is never late for work he may be delayed.
8. He never leaves his post he may be called away.
9. Any relationship between the boss and his secretary is purely educational.
10. The boss never reads the newspaper he studies it.
11. You enter the bosses' office with your ideas and leave with his.
12. The boss is always the boss even in his bathing costume.
13. The more you criticize the boss the smaller your bonus.
14. The boss does the thinking for everyone else.
15. So cooperate with your boss and do what he says willingly.

My Boss is always right.

Though humorous, these laws provide an insight into the power and dominance of the administration, both at the level of the school and the Ministry of Education. In the local newspaper, it was reported at another school that "the type of administration is more or less a one person dominance and no rules... the person knows what is right for the school" (Stabroek News: May 28, 1989:5) According to the report, many staff members were qualified and well equipped with teaching and administrative abilities and could have assisted in the proper administration of the school, but the dominance of the head did not allow for teachers' input.

Because of the continual domination of the administrator in another secondary school, many qualified and competent teachers requested transfers or resigned (Informal interview with ex-teacher). Although one cannot generalize from these examples, it does portray the inflexibility and dominance of the administrative staff in the Guyanese school system. This structural dominance inhibited new pedagogical techniques which might have transformed the teaching/learning process. This kind of managerial/administrative dominance was in congruence with the administrative practices of the Government as revealed in the earlier analysis of how the curriculum for schools was being developed. Interestingly enough, this ran counter to the stated Government policy of "workers participation in management" whether at the industrial or service sectors including the school system. But, implementation of the stated policy was virtually impossible, especially in view of the political role which the schools were expected to play in building up support for the Government.

In addition, the lack of facilities, especially financial and teaching resources were major factors contributing to the "chalk and talk" method of instruction in which most schools were engaged. In nearly all the schools in Guyana, there was a shortage of equipment to aid the process of teaching. Therefore, in the classrooms in Guyanese schools, the students spent almost all day focusing on the teacher and the chalk board. Financial constraints restricted the purchasing of basic materials such as cardboard, crayons, markers, etc. to make teaching aids. In some schools, chalk was even rationed and teachers did not have writing pads or exercise books to prepare their instructional programs on a daily basis (Informal interviews with teachers).

A survey conducted by the Curriculum Development Unit in 1988, found that very often unimaginative teaching methods which failed to develop interest or motivate students, were used in schools. Further, it mentioned that the evaluation techniques used also left much to be desired.

## Evaluation

The research will now focus on what was evaluated in the Guyanese schools and the response of the administrative staff of schools to this issue will be discussed.

These response disclosed that 47.5% (19) of school administrators in the City of Georgetown claimed that evaluation was done more than once during the term of thirteen weeks. In some cases, it was said to have been done every two weeks, on a monthly basis or at the end of a particular unit. Another 45% (18) indicated that evaluation was done terminally while only 7.5% (3) said it was conducted on an annual basis ie. once per year.

The research also investigated what kind of evaluation was done. In this regard, three categories of evaluation were derived from the questionnaire data, and these were: (a) formative evaluation only (b) summative evaluation only (c) a combination of both formative and summative evaluation. According to the data, both formative and summative evaluation was usually carried out, with 85% (34) of the administrative staff, claiming to have both types of evaluation being done in their schools. In the categories of formative evaluation only and summative evaluation only, the response was 7.5% (3) for each category. It was important to note that, no one suggested that diagnostic evaluation was being done in their schools. This kind of evaluation could be considered very useful in determining entry behaviour so that appropriate course or program of activities could be planned to cater for individual differences.

It would seem that evaluation was conducted fairly frequently in the schools. But, it was also interesting to discover what kinds of skills were evaluated. The skills reported to have been evaluated the most and the least by the administrative staff in their schools can be seen in Table 6.2.

**TABLE 6.2 SKILLS EVALUATED THE MOST AND THE LEAST IN THE PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

| SKILLS EVALUATED | SKILLS EVALUATED THE MOST | SKILLS EVALUATED THE LEAST |
|---|---|---|
| Cognitive | 100% (40) | 0.0% (00) |
| Affective | 5% (02) | 95% (38) |
| Psychomotor | 67.5% (27) | 32.5% (13) |
| Social | 7.5% (03) | 92.5% (37) |
| Critical | 35% (14) | 65% (26) |

From the figures, it would seem that the evaluation of cognitive skills (recall of knowledge/facts in this case) took priority in the Guyanese primary and secondary school system, while other skills such as affective, social and critical thinking which might be considered as equal in importance were not given as much attention in the evaluation process. It would seem that, the ability of students to interpret, analyze, critique or synthesize information was not fully developed in the students. In short, "high level" skills as hierarchically arranged in Bloom's taxonomy and those in the other domains seemed to be deficient in the school system.

This focus on teaching and evaluation of low level skills can be attributed to many factors. The shortage of basic texts and inadequate library facilities placed the teacher as the sole source of knowledge/information. The teachers did almost all the research/preparation for the lesson content and wrote them on the chalk board for students to copy. The notes were regurgitated for national as well as international examinations. In this regard, the content was alien to the students who lacked the first hand experience to do research for themselves and moreover examining the many artifacts or specimens to which they were orally introduced in their lessons.

The predominant practice of students being lectured to without any consideration of the suitability or appropriateness of the subject matter to their developmental level, induced the comment of one observer that "some teachers should change their profession for preaching". One of the major concerns expressed by some teachers was that their approach to teaching was inflexible. The time table which was to a large extent influenced by the curriculum developed by the Government, was very much crowded and teachers had to complete a quantity of work during an allocated period of time. There seemed to be no scope for individualized teaching or experimenting with other teaching strategies so as to make teaching more effective.

The size of the class and the overcrowding which occurred also affected the teaching/learning process. The national ratio of number of students to one teacher (40:1 in the primary schools and 30:1 in the secondary schools) was usually surpassed in the urban and some densely populated rural areas.

However, it is important to note that while such poor conditions occurred in almost all schools, the same cannot be said of the institution for the elite - the President's College - which was fully staffed and well equipped. For instance, with an enrolment of approximately 450 students, there were 215 staff comprising of 5 administrative staff, 31 senior technical staff of which 27 were teaching staff, 32 other technical and craft staff, 84 semi-skilled and unskilled staff, 16 clerical and office staff and 49 disciplined and service staff (Public Service Ministry Annual Report: March 1990: 66-67). The ratio of staff to students was approximately 1:2. Because of their absolute advantage in terms of teacher ratio, equipment, materials, facilities etc. the results at their first CXC examination in 1990 were much better in all the subjects in comparison to the country's results. Table 6.3 shows the performance of students at the President's College in comparison with the country as a whole at the CXC General Proficiency Examinations in 1990.

With the exception of the President's College, the

**TABLE 6.3 PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS AT THE PRESIDENT'S COLLEGE AND THE WHOLE COUNTRY AT THE CXC GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION 1990.**

| Subjects | President's College % age Passed Grades 1&2 | Whole Country % age Passed |
|---|---|---|
| English Language | 67.2 | 13.36 |
| English Literature | 44.4 | 17.20 |
| Mathematics | 85.5 | 16.89 |
| Social Studies | 94.0 | 12.18 |
| Geography | 92.0 | 22.70 |
| History | 92.3 | 17.98 |
| Art | 83.0 | 42.10 |
| Physics | 80.0 | 32.50 |
| Chemistry | 100.0 | 37.49 |
| Biology | 58.3 | 27.04 |
| Agriculture | 100.0 | 12.84 |
| Principles of Business | 89.0 | 38.32 |
| Principles of Accounts | 45.0 | 29.43 |
| Electronics | 100.0 | 60.83 |
| Wood Work | 100.0 | 55.40 |
| Technical Drawing | 100.0 | 50.69 |
| Clothing & Textile | 100.0 | 77.50 |

**Source: Compiled from past examinations results.**

conditions in the other schools posed severe strain on teachers, resulting in frustration, alienation, teachers absenteeism and total burnt out. It is very clear from these circumstances why low levels skills were imparted by archaic teaching in most schools in the country. In fact, only those students who were capable of memorizing data/information quickly, were surviving or being successful in school while the slow or weak learners did not. These conditions also reinforced the point made by teachers who claimed that, individual differences could not be catered for in the curriculum in Guyana.

With the economic decline which was being experienced by the country and the heavy expenditure on the RSA - the army and paramilitary organizations and the judiciary to maintain control - the Government did not have sufficient or extra funds to support the education services. Meanwhile, in an attempt to meet popular demand for education and by this means help to enhance its legitimacy, the Government kept on increasing its provision of education services. This meant that the per-capita cost of student's education was inadequate, presenting difficulties for teachers and a drop in the level of academic performance of the students. On the other hand, the Government was interested in ensuring that a new group of loyal individuals who would eventually be the future political elite would emerge. To achieve this objective, it established an elite secondary school (President College) with all the amenities it required so that this new group of political elite would be educated and trained. This new elite were to reinforce the hierarchical structure in the society. However, this was contradictory to the achievement of a socialist society in Guyana.

## Extra Curricular Activities

Although the majority of schools in Guyana concentrated on their academic work, opportunities were provided for students to participate in extra-curricular activities. The researcher requested both practising teachers and the administrative staff to indicate the extra-curricular activities in which their students or schools participated. The aim was to examine whether these activities were similar in terms of their objectives to those taught as part of the regular curriculum. Some of the respondents provided more than one response to the question, and these were categorized according to the questionnaire data which are as follows:

a) Clubs - such as music, religious, art, drama, dancing, etc.

b) Athletics - games, sports.

c) Mass games, rallies, participation at national events, national service.

d) Social activities - such as community and youth development, self-help and fund-raising activities.

e) Educational- such as tours, trips, debates, etc.

The practising teachers (23.3% or 14) and the school administrative staff (30% or 12) claimed that their students participated in club activities. In addition, 67.5% (27) of the administrative staff as compared to 48.3% (29) of the practising teachers indicated that their students were engaged in athletic activities such as games and sports. Further, both groups gave somewhat similar response to students' or schools' participation in social work activities i.e 10% (4) of the administrative staff verses 11.7% (7) of the teachers. In addition 32.5% (13) of the administrative staff and 25% (15) of the practising teachers claimed to have their schools or students participating in educational tours. About 90% (36) of the administrators and 78.3% (47) of teachers indicated that their students were engaged in mass games and national service activities.

Of all the extra-curricular activities listed, mass games and national service seemed to be the one category in which most students participated. However, the variation in the response of the administrative staff and practising teachers on students' participation in mass games, etc. could mean that while most schools might have participated in these activities, a responding teacher might not necessarily have his or her students involved in such activities. For instance, Grades 1, 2, and 3 students might have been considered too young to be engaged in these activities.

In terms of students being compelled to participate in these extra-curricular activities, about 50% (30) of the practising teachers answered in the affirmative. For the administrative staff, 32.5% (13) mentioned that the extra-curricular activities were compulsory, another 22.5% (9) said they were not compulsory, and about 45% (18) of them indicated that these extra-curricular activities formed a component of the students' evaluation. It is significant to note that, apart from the category of mass games, the other extra curricular activities were voluntary. But, since mass games and attendance at national events and rallies and national service were activities considered important in students' evaluation, they could be considered compulsory. Failure to comply with the demands to participate in these activities, debarred students from many opportunities such as attending a better quality secondary school, being awarded scholarships for undergraduate and even postgraduate studies, and most importantly access to jobs upon leaving schools.

These extra-curricular activities, especially participation in mass games and national service were considered a controversial issue by parents, therefore, it was necessary for the administrative staff of schools to obtain the consent of parents for their children to participate. In this regard, 65.2% (26) of the administrative staff sought parental consent while the others did not. Although more administrative staff sought parental consent according to the data, informal discussions with some of them suggested that, consent was needed only in special circumstances such as educational tours, camping, etc. There was no need to obtain parental permission for the other extra-curricular activities which were deemed important to the students as well as the school, the Government or society.

## The Relationship between Curriculum and National Goals

Practising teachers and the administrative staff of schools were next asked to indicate why they thought that curriculum changes were made in Guyana. The purpose was to see what interpretation was placed on Government's motivation in making major curriculum changes.

In response to the question, "Why curriculum changes were introduced in Guyana ?", the data revealed that 18% (11) of the practising teachers perceived changes in curriculum as replacing the colonial type of education. Another 27% (16) of the respondents perceived such changes as meeting the changing needs of the society in accordance with the political, economic, socio-cultural, technological and scientific changes. Further, 37% (22) of the teachers indicated that curriculum changes were undertaken to make the instructional programs more suitable to Government's national goals, policies and ideology, while 18% (11) of them perceived curriculum reforms as improving the standard or quality of the educational system and teaching at all levels throughout the country. In other words, 18% (11) of the respondents perceived curriculum reforms as a means of standardizing education especially where the content and level of achievement were concerned.

The standardization of curriculum helped with the teaching and preparation of students for national and international examinations and attempted to create parity in educational experiences. This view meant that the curriculum reform was not concerned with individual differences, experiences and competitiveness. In fact, these factors were superseded by cooperative activities which were considered by the PNC as a means to transform the society and a mechanism for economic development to achieve the objectives of "Cooperative Socialism". The inculcation of cooperative values was more suitable to the educational program in Guyana in terms of the national goals, policies and ideology of the ruling party. This was clearly highlighted in the curriculum documents sent to schools and the Mission Statements issued by the Ministry of Education which stated

> The Ministry of Education is responsible for promoting the socio-cultural development of Guyana through agriculture and other programs, making efficient use of all resources (local) and in collaboration with other agencies for fostering the growth of Cooperative Socialism in Guyana. (A Digest of Educational Statistics: 1984:1)

However, while this mission statement might have influenced the perceptions or response of some of the teachers (probably some accepted this view so as to retain their job), one head-teacher was horrified by the irony of the statement and professed that it was an illusion as the political rhetoric was at variance with what existed in the schools and society. For instance, cooperatives as a mode of economic activity failed to develop in Guyana as was evident in the number of cooperative societies which were liquidated because of their lack of economic viability and proper management. After a detailed investigation of co-operatives as a mechanism to achieve socialism in Guyana, Guy Standing observed that

> Most cooperatives, on which so much faith and rhetorical commitment have been lavished, have been cooperative in little more than name, and in the context of a persistently dominant sugar industry and a centralized government, cooperatives have almost certainly reproduced inequality without making a substantial contribution to economic growth or indeed much expansion in working-class power over the allocation and distribution of economic resources (Spinner: 1984:184)

In fact, the capitalist mode of production continued to dominate the society.

The fostering of positive attitudes towards agriculture did not seem to have been successful among the masses and the children, since the majority of them continued to seek academic type of education so that they could qualify to enter the more lucrative jobs in the modern sector of the economy (Interview with Education Officer). In addition, the diminishing returns from agriculture, the escalating cost of production along with its vulnerability to weather conditions and discriminatory practices by the Government in the distribution of inputs such as fertilizers and pesticides, etc. were contributing to the decline in agricultural profitability. Therefore, it was very difficult to get students to develop a liking for the subject.

Within recent times, small farmers were leaving the land and were either leasing or selling out to "big operators" and became wage labourers instead. This pattern tended to strengthen the capitalist mode of production which contradicted the socialist mode of production which the politicians were attempting to achieve. Further, it drove people away from the productive sectors such as agriculture to the service sector where returns were greater and also encouraged trading on the local "money market" for those who had little formal education.

It was found that 83.3% (50) of the practising teachers felt that the curriculum reflected the Government policies while only 50% (30) of the total number of practising teachers in the sample saw these changes as appropriate to the needs of the society. In other words, many teachers did not seem to equate the Government's policies with the needs of the society.

The administrative staff of schools were also asked to state what were the goals of curriculum reforms in Guyana. The response can be seen in Table 6.4

It is important to observe that only 17.5% (7) of the respondents focused on the meaningfulness of the program to the students while the overwhelming majority of 82.5% (33) appeared to concentrate on national issues particularly those related to Government policies and programs.

It would seem that, the students for whom the programs

### TABLE 6.4 THE GOAL OF CURRICULUM REFORMS IN GUYANA AS PERCEIVED BY THE ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF OF SCHOOLS

| Response | Percent |
|---|---|
| Raise the level of schooling for employment and for individuals to function effectively in the society. | (15)<br>37.5% |
| Support or develop support and appreciation for programs or policies of the Government | (11)<br>27.5% |
| Make the education program more creative and meaningful to students. | (7)<br>17.5% |
| Satisfying the needs for more Skilful individuals for the labour market. | (4)<br>10.0% |
| Reflect the changing needs of the society. | (3)<br>7.5% |

were designed and for whom the administrator bore sole responsibility, were somewhat neglected in the view expressed about curriculum goals. Rather than de-emphasizing the role of students, curriculum reforms should be directed at the students whose well-being would eventually lead to an improvement in the general welfare of the society.

The acknowledgement by the administrative staff of schools that governmental influence on school program was dominant, was revealed in the fact that 87.5% (35) thought that, most educational programs including curriculum changes were initiated by the Government. However, 62.2% (62) did not believe that the curriculum changes were achieving the national goals as declared by the PNC Government. Further, 65% (26) felt that the curriculum changes did not provide students with adequate skills to function effectively in jobs. In fact, employers were complaining about graduates of the school system not fully equipped with basic literary and numeracy skills necessary for the performance of certain tasks in their employment (Interview with Senior Labour Officer) . This contention was also supported by the Training Officer at the Public Service Ministry who claimed that the Ministry had to sponsor several training programs including the use of English courses in order to prepare new recruits for effective oral communication and writing good correspondence since they had to deal with the public.

Both groups of teachers were aware that the curriculum materials were directed at attempting to achieve the governmental goals. But in their experience, they realized that the goals were almost impossible to achieve due to reasons which will be discussed later.

## Curriculum Reforms, Job Opportunities and Development

The Government of Guyana attempted to ensure that its instructional programs prepared its students with the appropriate knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and dispositions for employment and economic development. In 1986 through its scholarship programs, the Government provided financial support for 358 students in local training institutions such as the University of Guyana, the Guyana

School of Agriculture, Government Technical Institutes, Burrows School of Art and Regional Education Program in Animal Health and Agriculture (REPAHA). Of the total, 47 commenced their training and 311 were continuing students. However, there were 2.2 times more students (779) who were funded overseas in the same year of which 137 commenced their training while 642 were continuing students (State Planning Secretariat: 1990).

Table 6.5 gives an indication of Guyana's expenditure on

**TABLE 6.5 EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL PUBLIC EXPENDITURE AND GNP 1967-1982.**

| Year | Education Recurrent/ Public Recurrent | Education Capital/ Public Capital | Education Total/ Public Total | Education Total/GNP Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1967 | 17.06 | 5.58 | 13.39 | 4.59 |
| 1968 | 16.52 | 5.97 | 13.48 | 4.51 |
| 1969 | 15.76 | 11.17 | 14.86 | 4.82 |
| 1970 | 15.18 | 7.88 | 13.02 | 4.84 |
| 1971 | 14.78 | 4.37 | 12.14 | 4.35 |
| 1972 | 15.79 | 7.00 | 13.41 | 5.37 |
| 1973 | 15.39 | 9.83 | 13.82 | 7.03 |
| 1974 | 15.65 | 11.89 | 14.56 | 6.03 |
| 1975 | 14.06 | 3.22 | 9.24 | 4.91 |
| 1976 | 13.19 | 3.84 | 9.57 | 6.76 |
| 1977 | 17.09 | 5.84 | 14.30 | 7.84 |
| 1978 | 15.61 | 9.93 | 14.51 | 7.06 |
| 1979 | 14.62 | 9.51 | 13.31 | 8.33 |
| 1980 | 12.82 | 8.53 | 11.47 | 8.45 |
| 1981 | 13.30 | 8.01 | 11.52 | 9.91 |
| 1982 | 11.36 | 2.87 | 7.26 | 10.91 |

**Source: A Digest of Educational Statistics.**

### TABLE 6.6 ENROLMENT, EXPENDITURE AND EXPENDITURE PER STUDENT BY LEVEL IN 1982.

| Level | Enrolment | Total Expenditure $000's | Expenditure per student |
|---|---|---|---|
| Nursery | 29,958 | 8,618 | 287.67 |
| Primary (including Secondary Departments of Primary Schools) | 155,165 | 34,684 | 223.53 |
| Secondary | 48,600 | 21,970 | 452.06 |
| Teacher Training | 758 | 1,917 | 2,529.02 |
| Technical\ Vocational | 3,908 | 11,971 | 504.35 |
| University | 2,004 | 15,000 | 7,485.03 |

**Source: A Digest of Educational Statistics.**

### TABLE 6.7 EXPENDITURE FOR SCHOLARSHIP AND TRAINING AT THE POST SECONDARY LEVEL.

| Year | Expenditure $000's |
|---|---|
| 1974 | 1,426 |
| 1975 | 1,289 |
| 1976 | 1,263 |
| 1980 | 11,828 |
| 1982 | 949 |
| 1984 | 7,533 |
| 1985 | 8,500 |
| 1986 | 7,00 |
| 1987 | 22,026 |
| 1988 | 15,000 |

**Source: A Digest of Educational Statistics.**

education as a percentage of total public expenditure and GNP, Table 6.6 provides figures on per capita expenditure at the various levels of education and Table 6.7 shows expenditure on scholarships and training from 1974 to 1988.

The rationale for allocating such expenditure on education as indicated earlier, was prompted by the expected returns on education. The investment in education was to produce benefits not only to the individual in terms of increased incomes (individual returns) but the society at large (social returns). According to the advocates of this school of thought, jobs in modern societies are requiring increasingly complex skills for their effective performance. That is the reason why many employers prefer to hire someone with academic qualifications or certain specialized skills rather than those without.

Following the Sophia Declaration in 1974 in which the PNC stressed the need to reorient the national human resources towards the greater service of the nation, the Government attempted to change the focus of the secondary schools by broadening their programs offered. This was observed in the Ministry of Education statement which stated

> The Ministry is committed to... (students acquiring) relevant knowledge, skills, attitudes and values pertinent to the economic, social and cultural advancement of the country's development thrust" (Ministry of Education Annual Report: 1983:5).

This was done largely by introducing into the curriculum of secondary schools, pre-vocational subjects which were considered to be of greater value to the students as they later prepared themselves for those occupations and developmental tasks most needed by the society. These attempts will now be discussed.

## Multi-lateral High School

With the financial assistance of the IBRD/IDA, six new Multi-lateral schools were established in the early 1970s. And it was proposed that the long term goal was to convert all secondary schools along the same lines. The aim was to give the students a more diversified practical secondary education in order to produce more versatile school leavers needed for the development of the country - a goal which the established type of grammar secondary schools could not have achieved. The objective was to have secondary school students better prepared both in terms of their educational backgrounds and their attitudes to enter a wider range of employment avenues, especially in the technical fields.

A common curriculum was to be followed by all during the first three years of secondary schooling, but during the last two years, the opportunity was to be provided for the students to pursue studies in one of the following subject areas:- Arts, Sciences, Technical, Commercial or Agricultural Studies and Home Economics.

However, this type of school did not live up to expectations. The multilateral schools came to be distinguishable only in name from the general secondary schools because they used the same curriculum with an academic bias. In fact, they were later categorized as general secondary schools rather than those with a technical or vocational orientation.

Part of the failure of these Multi-lateral schools to achieve their stated goals might have been due to the lack of qualified personnel to carry out the various programs and activities for which these schools were designed. While these externally financed multi-lateral schools were said to be well equipped initially, most of their equipment were lying idle because of the lack of trained teachers to use them. These became unusable after a period because of improper storage facilities. Some of them might even have been stolen from the schools or damaged in use by teachers who were often expected to keep the tools in their homes for safety (Informal discussion with Headteacher).

Any successful technical/vocational program depends on a significant input of materials and equipment. Therefore, the unavailability of some types of materials and equipment in many of these schools seriously hampered their success. Because of the economic decline which was occurring in the country, evidenced partly by the acute shortage of foreign exchange, funds were not available to purchase new equipment and materials. Even if, these materials and equipment were available on the local market, their prices would have exceeded the funds available to schools to purchase them. Also, repairing of some of these equipment was very costly. As a consequence technical/vocational programs were poorly taught in these schools.

The multi-lateral schools also lacked adequate and up to date textbooks. Because of textbook shortages, two or more students had to share one textbook. This prevented them from completing their home work assignments on time. Such practice was also a feature in almost all the schools in the country irrespective of their kind or level.

There was a severe shortage of staff which adversely affected the subjects offered in these schools and existing staff were under-motivated because of poor salaries. This seriously affected school's routine and discipline (Informal interviews with Headteachers). These shortcomings posed problems for the economy since students were leaving schools both unskilled and undisciplined and without developing an appropriate work ethic.

Another major problem was the teachers' preference for working in schools which were perceived as enjoying higher status in the community. Teachers were very reluctant to teach at the Multi-lateral schools and particularly at the Community High schools because of the low status associated with them (Interview with Education Officer). This differential status between these schools arose from the fact that, those students who were perceived as being the academically more able were selected for the traditional secondary schools. Only those of lesser ability were sent to the Multi-lateral and Community High schools where they could take technical and vocational courses. Therefore, unless drastic efforts are made to change the general image of technical/vocational training as being primarily for students with lesser abilities, the best students are not likely to be attracted to them. This will have a negative impact on the teaching of these subjects.

## Community High School

Prior to the establishment of Multi-lateral schools, the Community High Schools were introduced with the aim of providing post-primary education with a practical bias to those students who had failed to secure entry into the general secondary schools. Their occupational destination was to be jobs which required lower level skills such as apprentices to skilled trades or similar fields of employment. Another closely related objective, was to provide their students with the basic understanding and skills which would help them to establish cooperatives in fields such as construction, home-making, agro-business, commercial business, marketing and distribution, manufacturing and servicing, recreation, etc.

The training which they received was to help make it easier for them to create job opportunities for themselves.

These schools were to provide four years of instruction for students between the ages of 11 to over 15 years. During the first three years, the students were to devote 60% of their time to studying the academic subjects - English and Literature, Mathematics, Social Studies, General Science, Health and Physical Education, Music and Drama and the remaining 40% of the time was to be spent on pre-vocational subjects - Agriculture, Industrial Arts, Home Economics, Business Studies, Art and Craft. Of all these pre-vocational subjects, only Agriculture was done in the majority of the schools. The other subjects were not taught due to the lack of facilities, materials, equipment and teachers (Interviews with Headteachers). At the end of the third year, all students took the Secondary Schools Proficiency Examination (SSPE) and those who were successful, were awarded Part I of the secondary school leaving diploma. In the fourth year, 75% of the student's time was spent on pre-vocational subjects and work-study while the other 25% on academic subjects.

Work study programs were undertaken in Agriculture, Sanitation, Electricity, Plumbing, Masonry, Welding, Cooperatives and other skilled trades. The continuous assessment of students which was to be included in their work-study reports, formed the basis upon which they were awarded the final part - Part 11 - of the secondary school leaving diploma.

The pre-vocational studies, emphasized in a particular school, depended on the needs of the community in which it was located. In other words, the curriculum was organized with a view that learning experiences and activities provided for students will prepare them to work within and improve their communities when they leave schools.

The program in the CHS like that in the Multi-lateral schools, lost its intended direction due to a plethora of adverse factors. Foremost among them was the staffing problem. Teachers were not trained to offer the various programs. It was the expectation that the CHS would rely heavily on the artisans in the neighbourhoods to do some teaching in the schools. But, according to the Coordinator of the CHS program, these artisans turned out to be ineffective, since they usually had no formal training in the subjects they had to teach and therefore could not have prepared students adequately for national examinations. The Coordinator further mentioned that, some of them had no interest in teaching in the school environment.

These schools were in dire need of capable and competent teachers if instructions in such subjects as Industrial Arts, Business Education, Agriculture, Mathematics and Science were to be successful. Of most importance, the schools needed effective and understanding administrators with supportive attitudes to implement the programs at various levels

(Interview with the Coordinator of the CHS program). The present administrative and managerial inefficiency of schools and the education system in general were not conducive to the improvements required to achieve desired learning outcomes. In some of these schools, there were no curriculum guides, no students reports reflecting their levels of academic achievement, no guidance/counselling services to give students advice on future career choices, or interpersonal relationships with their fellow students, parents, teachers and the community (Ministry of Education: 1991).

A UNESCO (1985:132) team, commenting on the administration of the CHSs, reported that "the integrating of schools with the communities has not been realized as the Parent Teachers' Associations (PTAs) in many communities were non-existent" and where they were constituted, meetings were very irregular. In fact, many parents shied away from meetings because of their focus on "fund raising" activities (Informal discussions with parents).

A visit to the CHSs substantiated the fact that equipment was non-existent, unserviceable or inappropriate (observation during field work). This clearly showed the lack of commitment on the part of the authorities or their lack of funds to carry out the programs effectively. The Tracer Study which attempted periodic assessments of the effectiveness and relevance of the programs by following up the students after they left school, was discontinued. Therefore, there was an absence of research to assess the effectiveness of the programs.

In a majority of cases, the CHSs failed to take on the challenge of providing education of a non-academic type, and therefore, lapsed into offering a pale imitation of the academic type of program which was already available in the other secondary schools. The overall response by the public was their continued preference for their children to participate in the more prestigious academic programs (Interview with Education Officer).

Commenting on the status of the CHS by an individual who had worked with some of these schools, it was noted that

> There is no doubt that morale is very low in the Community High School circle. It is my considered opinion that the cause of much of this is the fact that the majority of persons who occupy senior positions in these schools are not conversant with the objectives of the Community High School, have not demonstrated an awareness of the strategies which lend themselves to such a school and have not demonstrated initiative in terms of attempting new strategies to make the system work. It is true that Ministry of Education has relaxed its grip on the situation considerably and has failed to make those necessary inputs which are vital to the maintenance and development of these schools and their respective programs (Plans for the Reorganization of the Community High School Program: A document prepared by the Ministry Of Education: 1991:2).

Because of the ineffective technical/vocational programs, 65% (26) of the administrative staff of schools did not consider that the Multi-lateral and CHSs assisted the graduates to secure gainful employment. In fact, employers had a negative attitude towards the SSPE diploma and they did not feel that it was suitable or adequate for employment purposes (Informal discussion with private employer). Students attending the CHSs and the secondary departments of primary schools therefore, left schools as liabilities to the society because they did not have the academic qualifications nor the necessary skills to be employable or to be self-employed. Considering that approximately 60% of secondary school students populate these institutions, it had serious consequences for the economic development of the society.

As a result of these problems, there were plans for the reorganization of the CHS program. In this proposed reorganization, the programs were to be extended from four to five years and five schools were to be designated Pilot Schools in this experiment. The first three years were to allow additional focus on the academic subjects, especially the "core" areas (English, Maths, Social studies, Integrated Science, Health Education, Physical Education) and some exposure to technical or pre-vocational courses - (Home-Economics, Industrial Arts, Agriculture, Business Studies, Craft). The final two years were to provide the students with the skills in one or more areas of a particular field. It was expected that the program would allow for remediation to meet the needs of low achievers. Also, an external examination assessing the capability of the students, was to be conducted at the end of the fifth year.

However, considering some of the problems facing the education system (costs, equipment, materials, teachers etc.), the reorganized program aimed at diversifying the curriculum is likely to prove futile. The pessimistic nature of this assumption is based on the fact that, it is useless to implement educational/curriculum reforms without making any real efforts to provide the necessary infrastructures, seeking the cooperation of parents, students and teachers and engaging in "grass-roots" decision making.

## Work Study Program

A program of work study was also established at the CHS to link the "world of study with the world of work". The aim was to get students to acquire skills, knowledge and desirable attitudes to work such as punctuality, regularity, efficiency, etc.

Although the work-study program provided students with some experiences, an interview with the Coordinator of the program, disclosed that there were many problems with the program. Foremost among these was, the lack of proper supervision of the students both by the persons in charge of them at the work sites and teachers who were supposed to make regular visits, but never turned up. Because of this situation, students did not know what was expected of them and they sometimes felt that they were wasting their time or were a problem for the organization. Students on the program often received stipends from the place of attachment and this practice served as an incentive to many of them, not to return to school, especially since the majority of them were from the poor or working class background.

It was found out that some students never received their stipends promptly and this affected their attendance and punctuality. Many even dropped out of the program. In some cases, the employers or supervisors in charge did not send in their evaluation of students' performance to the school or the Ministry of Education. Some students were according to the coordinator, even mistreated, physically abused, intimidated, embarrassed and sexually harassed during the period of their field experience.

## Curriculum Reforms at the Caribbean Examination Council (CXC) Level

The CXC was introduced in 1972 to overcome the criticisms that were continuously made about the irrelevance of the programs offered in the traditional secondary schools which led students to take overseas examinations set by UK universities. The range of examination subjects offered by the CXC grew rapidly from 5 in 1978 to 33 in 1990 of which 17 were technical and vocational subjects. Subjects could be taken at two levels - the General Proficiency level which was equivalent in standard to the GCE "O" Level examinations and the Basic Proficiency level which was designated by the CXC for students who did not intend to pursue advanced studies in the subject(s) or related areas and who would normally have dropped the subject in Form 4 or Grade 10.

A student can write the General and Basic Proficiency examinations separately, or in combination ie. General only or Basic only or a combination of both General and Basic. But, when writing the two levels together or separately, it does not necessarily follow that failing the General Proficiency examination will mean passing the Basic Proficiency examination. Each level of examinations is completely separated. The certificates awarded, provide detailed information which can be of particular value to employers since they indicate skills and aptitudes of the students. Further, profile grades on the certificate provide additional information on specific strengths/qualities and weaknesses in the particular areas of performance by the students.

In addition to a variety of skills that students were to develop during the course of their study, CXC uses a variety of assessment techniques to evaluate the performance of candidates. These include final written examination papers, oral examinations, practicals and school based assessment (SBA). The latter technique of evaluation is used in conjunction with the annual regional examinations and avoids the total reliance on "one short" examination. It involves the teacher's evaluation of the candidate course-work, assignments, projects and/or practical work which are set over a specific period of time. It ranges in value from 20 to 40% of the final mark in subjects such as, Agriculture Science, Art, Craft, Biology, Caribbean History, Chemistry, Home Economics and Industrial Arts, Integrated Science, Shorthand and Typing.

The CXC examination was designed for West Indian students including those in Guyana. The commitment of the Governments of the Caribbean towards the examination, resulted in its increasing popularity as can be seen from the number of candidates and entries which rose respectively from 30,276 to 65,000 and from 61,584 to 246,048 between 1979 and 1987. The rate of increase can be seen in Table 6.8.

## Problems of CXC

When the curriculum of CXC was suddenly introduced in the Caribbean and Guyana, the content of the curriculum/syllabuses was found to be wider than with which secondary school teachers were accustomed. This often required teachers to teach topics which they never previously studied. The teachers were therefore inadequately prepared and this was reflected in the poor performance of Guyanese students who

**TABLE 6.8 GROWTH IN THE NUMBER OF SUBJECTS AND CANDIDATES AND THE NUMBER OF SEPARATE PAPERS WRITTEN AT THE CXC BETWEEN 1979 AND 1987.**

| Year | No. of Subjects | No. of Candidates | No. of Separate Papers written |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1979 | 5 | 30,276 | 61,584 |
| 1980 | 11 | 39,709 | 101,047 |
| 1981 | 13 | 5,837 | 136,303 |
| 1982 | 21 | 53,758 | 169,504 |
| 1983 | 23 | 57,629 | 202,248 |
| 1984 | 23 | 59,909 | 213,621 |
| 1985 | 30 | 59,152 | 218,144 |
| 1986 | 30 | 57,547 | 212,149 |
| 1987 | 30 | 65,000 | 246,048 |

**Source: Compiled from CXC Records.**

**Note: The number of candidates writing the examinations from 1979 to 1987 more than doubled and the number of examination papers graded was more than four times from what it was in the first year of operation.**

wrote the first set of examinations in 1979. For example, the percentage of passes in Grades I and II were 29.5% in Caribbean History, 20.3% in English A, 31.6% in Geography, 24.5% in Integrated Science and 15.2% in Mathematics. As indicated above, this situation was partly due to the lack of qualified and experienced teachers and an increasing number of such individuals in Guyana were migrating to other Caribbean countries and North America where salaries and condition of work are better. Further, inadequate funding resulted in the inability of the schools to be furnished with the equipment, materials etc. for the effective implementation of the program.

The grade profile which was intended to provide information about a student's capabilities became a source of much contention. In the first place, the population remained fixated on whether someone passed or failed the examination, though the CXC's intention was to describe a student's performance. The University of Guyana accepted only those students who performed at Grades I and II at the General Proficiency while the public service including teaching accepted performance at Grades I to III. This in effect established a *de-facto* cut off point below which candidates were deemed to have failed. The rest of the society including private employers, followed suit and considered candidates who performed below Grade II at the Basic Proficiency and Grade III at the General Proficiency, as failed. As a consequence, only a small percent of students writing the examination can be considered successful. For instance, examination results indicated that approximately only 15-25% of Guyanese students were able to achieve Grades I and II in nearly all the subjects they wrote.

Another major concern of the CXC was to encourage students to sit for the Basic Proficiency courses which would prepare them for employment. However, in the Guyana context, this was not realized largely because, employers sought those applicants who took the General Proficiency courses and so did the University and training colleges. Therefore, there is a problem with the Basic Proficiency as some individuals questioned the valve of these examinations in terms of their purpose and what they measured. As a consequence, a smaller number of students sat the Basic Proficiency than the General Proficiency examination. For example, in 1990, 2,891 students entered to write the Basic Proficiency examination of which English and Maths accounted for 1,001 or 34.64% and 1,048 or 36.25% of the entries respectively. In comparison, 19,393 students entered for the General Proficiency examination in the same year. For such a situation to be rectified, there is the need for CXC to correct the public's view and build confidence in the curriculum/syllabi, the examinations and its grading policy.

One of the plausible reasons why more students sat the General rather than the Basic Proficiency examination, was the fact that, all students were taught the same syllabi at the same time and teachers made decisions about the level for which the students should enter (Informal interviews with Headteachers). The decision to enter for the General Proficiency examination could very well be influenced by the students or parents pressuring the teachers to let them or their children enter for the higher examination. Further, secondary school teachers often gave extra lessons after school hours for fees in those subjects of their specialization. And by operating on the assumption that they can help to ensure passes at the General Proficiency examination for those students under their charge, (a fact which parents and students gullibly believe) they encouraged students to enter for the General Proficiency examination.

Extra lessons became a norm in Guyana. The Stabroek News commented on this problem with an article captioned "Children attend school but are educated afternoons at lessons" (Stabroek News: February 13, 1987:5). For those who can afford these lessons for their children (the middle and upper classes), this opportunity is likely to increase their pass rates. But nevertheless, the overall examination results for the past decade were disastrous at both levels. For example, only 4% of the students were able to "pass" in 5 or more subjects at the CXC examinations in 1990. This situation surely brings out the enormous waste of human resources in the country which can have serious consequences on economic development.

## National Fourth Form Achievement Test

In response to the continual failure rates of Guyanese students in comparison with their Caribbean counterparts, the National Fourth Form Achievement Test (NAFFAT) was introduced in 1988 as a screening device, determining who will write what subjects at the CXC and at what level. It hoped to give education officials including teachers, a better indication of how students would perform at the CXC examination, since it had been the experience of many schools that a number of weak students signed up to sit the CXC and performed poorly because they were not properly prepared and did not know what was expected of them.

A circular signed by the Chief Education Officer in 1988, was sent to secondary schools stating the objectives of NAFFAT, which were:

1) To seek to establish performance norms at the fourth form level.
2) To provide teachers with the direction necessary for adequate preparation for effective teaching to meet the requirements of the CXC.
3) To identify students who may have a reasonable chance of success at the CXC exams.
4) To identify areas of weaknesses which can be corrected during the first two terms of the fifth form year.
5) To provide more teachers with skills in setting and marking examinations.

All fourth formers in the secondary schools who hoped to take the CXC examination were expected to write the test which replaced the School's Annual Examination in those subjects. But, not all of them would write the CXC examination. The test was prepared in Guyana along the same lines as the CXC. Those students who did badly at the test were asked to leave school (Informal discussion with the Coordinator of NAFFAT). They would eventually fall into the ranks of the "uneducated unemployed".

Since the test was introduced to assess the strengths and weaknesses of students and to identify in what areas the teachers or schools had to take immediate action, one doubts whether teachers could have satisfactorily improved the areas in which students were weak. This is based on the fact that, the problems associated with student's weak performance were accumulated over a period of time in the schools due to the problems facing the education system. Therefore, it cannot be expected that these weaknesses can be overcome within a short period of time.

Since the screening began in 1988-89 academic year, there was no convincing evidence that the students were performing any better. Table 6.9 illustrates the point.

**TABLE 6.9 THE COMPARISON OF PERFORMANCE OF GUYANESE STUDENTS PASSING GRADES I AND II AT THE CXC (G.P) IN 1985 AND 1990.**

| 1985 | | 1990 | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Subjects | Grades I &II % age | Subjects | Grades I &II % age |
| Agriculture | 19.38 | Agriculture | 12.84 |
| Caribbean History | 33.23 | Caribbean History | 17.98 |
| English Language | 19.18 | English Language | 13.36 |
| English Literature | 22.47 | English Literature | 17.20 |
| Geography | 24.30 | Geography | 22.70 |
| Integrated Science | 27.50 | Integrated Science | 23.88 |
| Mathematics | 22.66 | Mathematics | 14.89 |
| Social Studies | 25.23 | Social Studies | 12.18 |
| Food and Nutrition | 51.53 | Food and Nutrition | 39.27 |
| Short Hand | 23.07 | Short Hand | 0.00 |
| Office Procedures | 23.26 | Office Procedures | 9.15 |
| Typewriting | 67.26 | Typewriting | 29.21 |

**Source: Compiled from Past Examination Results.**

**Note: No comparison was made with Biology, Chemistry and Physics as these subjects were written for the first time in 1986.**

A review of a few CXC Annual Reports on candidates performance, indicated some of the general weaknesses of students writing the CXC. Although these reports did not refer specifically to Guyanese students, they do point out some common observations of examiners. Among these were: lack of comprehension, misunderstanding of questions and basic concepts, expression deficient in clarity and logic, using inappropriate vocabulary, spelling and grammatical errors, poor display of analytical, critical, enquiry, interpretative, investigating and problem-solving skills, lack of knowledge and preparation and guess work (CXC: Annual Reports).

Some of these weaknesses were reflected in the findings of this research. For instance, comments were made by the examiners in their annual reports that, candidates writing the CXC did not display high level skills including analytical and critical ones in their answers. The same was true of Guyanese students because the teachers seemed not to impart or try to inculcate high level skills in their students. In other words, if students were not taught to develop these skills, then it would be obvious that such deficiencies would surface in the evaluation process.

It is interesting and important to learn how people perceived their roles in a given undertaking. An interview with a CXC official in Guyana pointed out that, the climate in which CXC functioned was clouded by an educational system which:

a) still catered to a small percent of children.

b) was experiencing a severe shortage of teachers.

c) employed many inadequately trained and untrained or unqualified teachers.

d) paid teachers poorly.

e) did a poor job in some content areas.

Despite these shortcomings, the society attaches great importance to these examinations in the same way it does for the Secondary School Entrance Examination. A parent, when asked about the frenzy which accompanies the CXC examinations, commented

> ...regardless of what CXC examination might be in theory, in practice it is an exam that you must pass in order to get a job or qualify for anything further... It makes teachers anxious because if students fail it is like the teachers have failed. (Informal Interview)

Another major problem of the CXC, was the tendency of teachers to view the syllabus as containing the maximum set of topics that should be taught. Several mathematics teachers for instance, admitted that they stopped teaching logic and reasoning because it was removed from the syllabus. This had serious implications for those students who intended to pursue further studies in mathematics at the university level where basic "computation" skills which require only "rote" learning are not recognized but are replaced by high cognitive process such as constructive proofs, requiring skills in logic, reasoning and critical thinking. These issues raised a series of questions about the impact which CXC was having on the educational situation in the country, particularly in regard to the process of development.

## Evaluation

A cursory examination of the curriculum reforms, especially at the post primary level revealed that the Government, policy makers and educators supported the notion that the diversification of the curriculum would assist in the preparation of human resources with various knowledge, skills and dispositions for economic development. However, despite these assumptions and efforts made and the financial costs involved, the country was experiencing a severe shortage of manpower, particularly skilled manpower. This contention was supported by 84% (50) of the practising teachers and 76% (30) of the school administrators in the sample. In fact, the economy was in dire need of approximately 1500 skilled individuals, and since this could not have been met locally, the Government in 1990 granted 900 work permits to foreigners with appropriate skills from various countries to work in both the public and private sectors (State Planning Secretariat: 1991).

In 1991, it was reported that the Public Service had a vacancy rate of 40% in all the various job classifications ranging from top level managerial positions to the lowest rung in the service. And considering that a number of retired public servants were rehired, the vacancy rate could very well be over 50%. Because the Public Service was not attracting qualified personnel, it lowered its entry qualifications from 5 and 6 subjects at the CXC or GCE "O" level to 4 subjects including English Language. However, this did not guarantee that the vacancies were filled by qualified individuals. In fact, the situation was so critical that the Public Service Ministry and Teaching Service Commission were prepared to hire individuals without entry qualifications. Incidentally, the Statistic Bureau was highly understaffed with no technicians to operate the computer (Informal discussion with senior Statistician). Therefore, there was a deficiency of data, and one cannot be certain about the reliability of the data supplied by these departments.

Because of the lack of a reliable data base, decisions on the types of training required were largely derived from diverse and often *ad hoc* sources such as policy speeches and ministerial reports. One explanation for this situation had been attributed to the lack of proper coordination and functioning training divisions by the ministries, industries and corporations (Interview with senior Planning Officer, State Planning Secretariat). An IDB study in 1985 identified the need for a massive training program to provide professional, technical and managerial workers along with qualified technicians for the preparation, implementation, evaluation, and operation of industrial and agricultural projects and others responsible for the operation of the water control systems. Among specific types of trained personnel needed were: geologists, petroleum engineers, physical scientists, natural scientists, computer scientists, statisticians, engineers, mathematicians and architects. In addition, the Public Service Ministry in 1987 also carried out a Training Needs Survey in the Public Service and found that training was needed in major areas such as Engineering and Technology, Forestry and Agriculture, Earth Sciences, Social Sciences, Education, Medicine, Optometry, Computer Science and Related Areas.

The irony of the situation was that, while a high vacancy rate existed in all sectors of the economy, the unemployment rates were steadily increasing with approximately 25-30% of the labour force unemployed "with underemployment bringing the total to about 40 percent" (Spinner: 1984:184). This meant that in the early 1980s, of a labour force of approximately 230,600 about 25% ie. 57,450 individuals were unemployed and in the late 1980s, about 90,000 or 30% of the labour force of 300,000 were without jobs. The increasing rate of unemployment was partly due to a reduction in the size of the Public Service ie. decreasing from 98,848 in 1980 to 73,258 in 1984 and a further reduction from 75,947 in 1985 to 66,928 in 1989 (IDB Report: 1987:81).

Part of this situation was due to the ineffectiveness of the schools in providing the kind of education that was necessary for individuals to receive further training in the various fields mentioned (Informal interview with Senior Planning Officer, State Planning Secretariat). For instance, the examination results showed a decline in the average percentage passing the CXC examination which was the prerequisite for further training. This fell from around 25% in 1985 to 15% in 1990. Table 6.10 shows the cumulative numbers of candidates who wrote the CXC from 1979 to 1990 with the exception of 1982 and 1983, the cumulative number of candidates gaining Grades I and II, and the percentage of such grades to the cumulative number of students writing the examination in each subject at the General Proficiency Level.

Table 6.10, illustrates the percentage of students considered as passing the various subjects, likewise it can give an indication of the percentage of students who failed to acquire passes in each of the recorded subjects. If failing to acquire passes at the examination is considered wastage of human and other resources, then it is easy to observe from the table, the magnitude of the resources which have been wasted over the years. The table further provides an indication of the large number of Guyanese students who lacked the prerequisite academic qualifications for training in the various fields which the economy so badly needed. These observations obviously had serious repercussions on an ailing economy.

**TABLE 6.10 THE CUMULATIVE NUMBER OF GUYANESE CANDIDATES WHO SAT THE VARIOUS SUBJECTS AT THE GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION BETWEEN 1979 AND 1990 AND THE CUMULATIVE NUMBER WHO OBTAINED GRADES I & II.**

| Subjects | Total Sat | Total Grades I & II | % Age |
|---|---|---|---|
| English Language | 35,929 | 6,506 | 18.11 |
| English Literature | 8,445 | 1,623 | 19.22 |
| French | 419 | 228 | 52.42 |
| Spanish | 2,096 | 387 | 18.46 |
| Mathematics | 28,212 | 5,052 | 17.09 |
| History | 10,883 | 3,116 | 28.63 |
| Geography | 14,582 | 3,072 | 21.06 |
| Biology | 2,223 | 578 | 26.00 |
| Chemistry | 2,021 | 800 | 39.58 |
| Physics | 1,993 | 601 | 30.16 |
| Integrated Science | 2,495 | 588 | 23.57 |
| Social Studies | 6,472 | 967 | 14.94 |
| Agriculture | 1,062 | 85 | 8.00 |
| Principles of Accounts | 6,742 | 2,037 | 30.21 |
| Principles of Business | 9,343 | 2,101 | 22.49 |
| ShortHand | 93 | 17 | 18.23 |
| Typing | 933 | 305 | 32.69 |
| Office Procedures | 2,948 | 338 | 11.47 |
| Clothing & Textiles | 163 | 54 | 33.13 |
| Food & Nutrition | 1,037 | 450 | 43.39 |
| Home Economics | 361 | 124 | 34.34 |
| General Electricity | 188 | 87 | 46.28 |
| Metal | 186 | 118 | 63.44 |
| Technical Drawing | 1,486 | 661 | 44.48 |
| Woods | 260 | 132 | 50.77 |

**Source: Complied from past Examination Results.**

**Note: 1982 and 1983 results are not included.**

From Table 6.10, it can be observed that the lowest percentage of students obtaining passes at Grades I and II was in Agriculture which was so much emphasized by the Government. The Government's emphasis on the teaching of agriculture in schools was to let students develop positive attitudes in the subject so that they can help the Government to achieve its policy of "Grow More Food" and to be self sufficient in food production. But, from the examination results over the years, students did not seem to be attractive to the subject.

It can also be observed from Table 6.10 that, although the number of candidates writing the Technical/Vocational subjects was small, their performance especially in Clothing and Textile, Food and Nutrition, Home Economics, General Electricity, Metal, Technical Drawing, Woods was better than in the "academic" subjects. But, considering the "value" placed on the "academic" subjects for better jobs, prestige and remuneration, students continued to enter for the academic subjects although the results were very poor. Tables 6.11 and 6.12 give an indication of the continual preference for the academic subjects as reflected in both the General and Basic Proficiency Examinations in 1990.

It can be observed from Table 6.11 that, the technical and vocational subjects accounted for only 3.9% of the total number of subjects Guyanese students wrote in 1990, while the Commercial subjects accounted for 19.06% which was higher than the science subjects (13.02%). Considering the emphasis the Government placed on science, business and technology in the process of developing the economy, it would seem that these areas were not sufficiently catered for in the school system as they accounted for 36.98% of all the subjects written at the 1990 examination. Judging from the CXC examinations, the efforts to introduce more technical/vocational or practical

**TABLE 6.11 SUBJECTS WRITTEN BY GUYANESE STUDENTS AT THE GENERAL PROFICIENCY LEVEL BY CATEGORIES IN 1990.**

| **TECHNICAL/VOCATIONAL** | 3.90% | **SCIENCE SUBJECTS** | 13.02% |
|---|---|---|---|
| Art & Craft | 3 | Agriculture Science | 319 |
| Craft | 14 | Biology | 625 |
| Clothing & Textile | 49 | Chemistry | 528 |
| Food & Nutrition | 168 | Integrated Science (I) | 494 |
| Home Economics | 62 | Integrated Science (II) | 33 |
| General Electricity | 59 | Physics | 526 |
| Metals | 36 | Total | 2525 |
| Technical Drawing | 286 | | |
| Woods | 74 | | |
| Mechanical Technology | 75 | | |
| Total | 755 | | |
| **ARTS SUBJECTS** | 25.84% | **BUSINESS SUBJECTS** | 19.06% |
| Art | 38 | Office Procedures | 590 |
| Caribbean History | 1301 | Principles of Accounts | 1294 |
| Geography | 1171 | Principles of Business | 1641 |
| Social Studies | 1705 | ShortHand | 17 |
| English (B) | 796 | TypeWriting | 154 |
| Total | 5011 | Total | 3696 |
| **MODERN LANGUAGES** | 1.40% | **ENGLISH (A)** | 19.83% |
| | | Total | 3845 |
| French | 74 | | |
| Spanish | 197 | **MATHEMATICS** | 16.96% |
| Total | 271 | Total | 3290 |

**Source: Complied from past Examination Results.**

**TABLE 6.12 SUBJECTS WRITTEN BY GUYANESE STUDENTS AT THE BASIC PROFICIENCY LEVEL BY CATEGORIES IN 1990.**

| **ARTS SUBJECTS** | 14.70% | **TECHNICAL/VOCATIONAL** | 4.23% |
|---|---|---|---|
| Caribbean History | 68 | Clothing & Textile | 2 |
| Geography | 98 | Food & Nutrition | 9 |
| Social Studies | 259 | General Electricity | 6 |
| Total | 425 | Metals | 7 |
| | | Office Procedures | 55 |
| **SCIENCE SUBJECTS** | 1.00% | Technical Drawing | 38 |
| | | Woods | 8 |
| Integrated Science (I) | 29 | Total | 125 |
| Total | 29 | | |
| **BUSINESS SUBJECTS** | 7.14% | **MODERN LANGUAGES** | 1.38% |
| Book Keeping | 56 | French | 5 |
| Principles of Business | 151 | Spanish | 35 |
| Typewriting | 16 | Total | 40 |
| Total | 223 | | |
| **ENGLISH (A)** | 34.62% | **MATHEMATICS** | 36.25% |
| Total | 1001 | Total | 1048 |

**Source: Compiled from past Examination Results.**

subjects was not taken seriously by the population. In commenting on this point, Dr. Augier called for a change in attitude towards technical/vocational education and implored teachers, parents and students to consider the importance of these subjects and not relegate them to the less able students (Stabroek News: October 16, 1988:3).

If the subjects were to be placed into two broad categories i.e. "academic" (Arts, Sciences, Modern Languages, English Language and Literature and Mathematics) and Technical/Vocational including the Business subjects, it will be seen that the Technical/Vocational subjects accounted for only 22.96% of all the subjects written, while the "academic" subjects (77.04%) continued to attract a higher percentage of candidates.

At the Basic Proficiency level, as pointed out before, (see Table 6.12) the total number of subjects written was smaller than those at the General Proficiency. The Technical/Vocational subjects including the Business subjects accounted for only 11.46% of the subjects written at the Basic Proficiency level, while the "academic" subjects accounted for 88.54%. Worthy of note is the fact that, both English Language (34.62%) and Mathematics (36.25%) attracted the largest number of candidates. Together they accounted for 70.87% of all the subjects written at the Basic Proficiency in 1990.

The high percentages of students writing English Language and the Mathematics at both levels reflected the importance of these subjects on the job market. This is particularly true of English. However, in these two subjects - English and Maths - it seems increasingly more difficult for candidates to obtain passes at Grades I and II, than in the other subjects. For instance, passes in English Language at these grades (1 and 11) at the General Proficiency fell from 20.3% in 1979 to 13.369% in 1990, while for Mathematics, the passes were 15.2% to 16,89% over the same period. In the science subjects such as Biology, Chemistry and Physics, the performance at the 1990 examination in Grades I and II at the General Proficiency was better than English and Mathematics. For example, while the percentages of passes in English and Mathematics were 13.36% and 16.89% respectively, the passes were: for Biology 27.04%, Chemistry 37.59% and Physics 32.50%.

The CXC Examining Committee commenting on the students' performance in Mathematics in 1986 referred to the "lack of fundamental computation and comprehension skills, clarity of thoughts, mathematics reasoning, written expression and unsatisfactory presentation of work (Guyana Chronicle: September 22, 1986:4). The poor performance in mathematics was partly due to the shortage of teachers in this area. In recent times, teachers particularly those in science and mathematics were abandoning the profession and this was reflected in the poor performance of students in these subjects (Informal interview with the Superintendent of Examinations).

Part of the poor performance in English Language might have been due to the fact that, students frequently spoke "patois" "Creolese" or "Broken English" which provided them with great difficulty in converting the dialect into Standard English. Further, students failed to develop analytical or critical thinking skills which were essential to comprehend and interpret written prose. The low standard and performance among students was also related to the fact that teaching was not attracting the best graduates from secondary and post secondary training institutions (Informal interview with the

Director of NCERD).

In order to attract individuals to the teaching profession, the Training Colleges were offering a preliminary year of training for those with low levels of academic achievements. In addition, they were provided with financial incentives and other conditions similar to the regular students (Interview with senior staff at the Teacher's Training College). However, this scheme was not successful and the number of teachers graduating from the training colleges was constantly declining. For example, in 1985 the Teacher Training Colleges graduated 338 teachers in the nursery, primary and secondary programs but by 1990 the total number of graduates decreased to 185 (State Planning Secretariat: 1990).

Noticeable decrease in graduates from other post secondary institutions was also recorded. In the early 1980s, 400 students graduated from the University of Guyana and 329 from the Government Technical Institutes. But in the late 1980s these figures declined to 310 and 280 respectively (State Planning Secretariat: 1990). The decrease in the enrolment and graduates at post secondary institutions might have contributed to the ineffectiveness of the primary and secondary schools in producing individuals with the basic qualifications to enter these institutions.

A large number of students graduating from the primary and secondary schools, lacked the basic reading, writing, language and computational skills. In other words, the level of functional literacy and skills in numeracy was decreasing. This educational underdevelopment and consequent under-utilization of the human resources available in turn limited the ability of the country to adapt to changing circumstances and to make the best use of limited human resources.

In addition to the poor academic performance of students, was the high drop out rates at the Primary (21.4%), Secondary Department of Primary Schools (27.6%), General Secondary (20.7%) and the Community High Schools (28.8%) (A Digest of Education Statistics: 1983-84). This situation led to the continual decline in the level of functional literacy and numeracy skills in the society. Data from the Ministry of Education showed that in the Primary Schools and Secondary Departments of Primary Schools, there were 13,011 out of 144,055 students who dropped out of school in 1984 (A Digest of Education Statistic: 1983-84). Of this number, 2733 or 21.0% were employed and 710 or 5.5% were classified as skilled, while 2023 or 15.6% were unskilled and the remaining 10,278 or 78.9% were unemployed or unaccounted for. At the General Secondary Schools, the number of students who dropped out in 1984 was 5213 out of a population of 31,469 students. Of this total, 1386 or 26.6% were employed - with 411 or 7.9% deemed as "skilled" and 975 or 18.7% were unskilled - 3827 or 73.4% were unemployed or unaccounted for. In the same year, 2969 out of 10,863 students dropped out from the Community

High School. Of those 718 or 24.2% were employed - 101 were claimed to be skilled and 617 or 20.8% were unskilled - the remaining 2250 or 75.8% were unemployed or unaccounted for (A Digest of Education Statistics: 1983-84).

Another major problem which seemed to affect secondary schools students was that, with the poor and declining economic situation of the country, fees charged for writing the CXC and GCE examinations were beyond the financial ability of most parents. In 1982, the entry fee for the CXC was G.$32.90 while the GCE was G.$42.50. In the same year, the fee was $31.40 for each subject at the CXC, while it was $39.00 for the GCE. However, these fees have risen astronomically in 1990 as a result of the various devaluations of the Guyana dollar during the 1980s.

The figures in Table 6.13 show the increases in fees in 1990.

**TABLE 6.13 COST OF WRITING SUBJECTS AT THE CXC, GCE "O" AND "A" LEVELS IN 1990.**

| No. of Subjects | CXC | GCE "O" | GCE "A" |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | $2,305 | $3,680 | $6,655 |
| 2 | $3,510 | $7,360 | $13,310 |
| 3 | $4,715 | $17,040 | $19,965 |
| 4 | $5,920 | $14,720 | - |
| 5 | $7,125 | - | - |
| 6 | $9,330 | - | - |
| 7 | $9,535 | - | - |

**Source: Curricular No. 7/1900 - Sent to Secondary Schools by the Chief Education Officer.**

**Note: The fees do not include entrance fees or addition fees for practical subjects and the use of other facilities.**

Commenting on the escalating costs of fees, the local newspaper reported that

> the authorities can offer little hope to gain sympathy and understanding from the students who are prepared to write external examinations, and must in the majority of cases see their dreams go through the window because they or their parents are unable to afford the exorbitant scale of fees (Stabroek News: November 28th, 1990:5).

Consequently, secondary education increasingly became the privilege of a minority which subsequently reinforced the social reproduction of the society. This posed a serious contradiction for the Government which frequently stated that its policy was one of equality of educational opportunities and free education from nursery to university.

However, in 1987, the Government began to subsidize the examination fees, especially for low income parents. But, this scheme was not fully utilized by the working class because of their lack of awareness of its existence and the bureaucracy involved. Because of the lengthy procedure in processing the applications and the amount of "paper work" that was involved in the scheme, it posed strain on the overworked teachers and the administrators, who were already under severe work pressure.

NAFFAT was also used as a guide to determine whether students were qualified for Government subsidies and writing the CXC examinations. But, many never overcame this hurdle. In 1990 the percentage of passes in Grades 1 and 11 in some of the subjects at NAFFAT were: Agriculture Science 13.5%, Biology 3.79%, Caribbean History 9.87%, Chemistry 5.11%, English Language 27.29%, Geography 9.1%, Integrated Science 12.7%, Mathematics 6.7%, Physics 13.1%, Social Studies 18.6%, Clothing and Textile 9.5%, Food and Nutrition 34.1%, Office Procedures 14.3%, ShortHand 20.5%, General Electricity 36.4%, Woods 40.6%, Technical Drawing 25.5%, Principles of Accounts 19.6%, Principles of Business 37.0% (Ministry of Education: 1990).

This seriously affected the majority of students from working class backgrounds because, even if those from the higher socio-economic status did not perform well at this examination, their parents by virtue of their better economic position, were able to pay the examination fees. In short, the "exorbitant" fees along with the low level of performance at NAFFAT, were mechanisms built into the education system to further deprive the already disadvantaged groups in the society from achieving social and economic mobility. In other words, educational opportunities within the socalled "egalitarian" society became increasingly class based.

One of the major problems associated with the efforts at linking schooling more directly with the world of work by diversifying the curriculum at the post-primary level in Guyana, was that there appeared to be some mismatch between the education which students received and the jobs available. It is being suggested here, that these problems were imbedded in the social and economic fabric of the society and could not be attributed almost exclusively to the failure of the educational system. A manpower survey in the country highlighted the fact that unemployment problem in Guyana was not entirely due to the educational system "but stemmed essentially from the slow rate of economic growth" (Bacchus: 1980:51).

Unemployment is growing steadily in the society partly due to individuals not having the relevant skills and the Government's adherence to the IMF recommendations to restructure and reduce the service sector. The unemployment situation was even more critical among the school leavers as they comprised approximately 45 to 55% of the unemployed labour force under 19 years of age.

Part of the reason for this situation was the fact that, since the Government nationalized and controlled the economy in the early 1970s, domestic and international private investments declined substantially. Therefore, the scope for job creation was minimal. In fact, up to the 1990, there was no international private companies investing or operating in the country. During the period 1978 to 1984, public investment in the productive sector which included Agriculture, Forest and Fishing, Industry, Mining and Quarrying ranged from 45.9% to 58.9%. In the physical infrastructure sector which included Power, Transportation and Communications, the range was 12.8% to 32.9%. Investment in the social infrastructure such as Education and Culture, Health, Water and Sewage and Housing, ranged from 6.7% to 13.7%, while in the "other" sector, it ranged form 1.6% to 22.0% (World Bank Report: 1986:3:40). In the productive sector, during the same period, the highest percentage of investment was in Agriculture (29.6% to 46.6%). However, over 37% of the agriculture investment was allocated to drainage and irrigation projects as a result of the topology of the coastland. It is interesting to note that, domestic private investment in industry, during the same period, ranged from a meagre 4.9% to 17.7%. Because of such neglect, job creation in the economy was hindered.

Even in the field of agriculture, unemployment was growing as a result of mechanization. For example, in the 1940s over 46% of the labour force was employed in agriculture but by the mid 1970s this figure decreased to about 23%. In addition to shrinking employment opportunities, the cost of cultivating new lands entailed heavy capital expenditure, and there was no guarantee that the rate of return would warrant the investment. These obstacles drove students away from agriculture, technical and vocational courses. Therefore, contrary to the belief once held, the problem of unemployment cannot be overcome by attempting to make the curriculum of school in Guyana more relevant to the job needs of the society.

The link between education and work has to extend beyond the provision of certain courses of study aimed at giving students the requisite knowledge, attitudes and skills which are likely to result in a better articulation between school and work. The whole socio-economic context in which these school programs were initiated has to be considered and might lead to the conclusion that, other socio-political and economic reforms might have to be undertaken concurrently with the introduction of such programs if they were to be successful. Attention will now focus in the next section on those factors which aided or inhibited curriculum reforms.

## Factors Aiding/Inhibiting Curriculum Reforms

Both the administrative staff of schools and practising teachers were asked as a group to indicate what factors within and outside the school, they perceived as aiding or inhibiting curriculum changes.

29% (29) of the respondents perceived the availability of qualified and experienced teachers as the most important factor within the school which could facilitate curriculum changes. This was followed by 26% (26) of the respondents who perceived adequate texts, materials, equipment and facilities as contributing to effective curriculum changes. For 23% (23) of the teachers, students' attitudes and motivation were considered necessary to aid curriculum changes while 22% (22) felt that good relationship among colleagues was important.

With reference to those factors within the school which can be considered as inhibiting curriculum changes, teachers' responses were quite similar as reflected in the figures in Table 6.14.

**TABLE 6.14 FACTORS WITHIN THE SCHOOLS INHIBITING CURRICULUM REFORMS.**

| FACTORS WITHIN SCHOOLS INHIBITING CURRICULUM REFORMS | PERCENTAGE |
|---|---|
| Bureaucratic problems in schools | 17 (17) |
| Overcrowding | 17 (17) |
| Unqualified and shortage of staff | 17 (17) |
| Unavailability of texts, materials, equipment | 17 (17) |
| Poor conditions of work, low salaries | 16 (16) |
| Financial constraints/ lack of funds | 16 (16) |

It is also necessary to shed some light on those factors outside the schools which might be considered as aiding or inhibiting curriculum changes.

According to the data, 24% (24) of the respondents considered parental cooperation and involvement in curriculum decisions as the most important factors which can aid curriculum changes. 23% (23) perceived adequate finance as contributing to effective changes. Another 21% (21) considered the incorporation of societal needs and values as essential to curriculum changes, while 17% (17) expressed the concern that, a change in Government policies can be an effective instrument in facilitating curriculum changes. However, 15% (15) felt that changing international trends had an important impact on curriculum changes in Guyana.

With reference to those external factors which were perceived to be hindering curriculum changes in the school, 24% (24) of the respondents considered the lack of community involvement or parental cooperation and participation in school activities as the number one factor inhibiting curriculum changes. The second most inhibiting factor as perceived by 23% (23) of the respondents, was the inadequate financial allocation to education. This was followed by 19% (19) of the respondents who felt that, the shortage of qualified and experienced teachers was a major inhibiting factor, while 18% (18) claimed that poor Government policies and political interference in education were detrimental to curriculum changes. 16% (16) of the respondents claimed that too much bureaucracy in the Ministry of Education was also responsible for inhibiting curriculum changes.

From the data presented, it is obvious that the absence of qualified and experienced teachers was considered an inhibiting factor of any curriculum change. "Curriculum development without teachers development is impossible" (Howson: 1978:219).

In addition to their qualification and experience, there were a number of factors which militated against teachers' contribution to curriculum change. Firstly, was the policy of the Government to control the curriculum development process by concentrating it in the hands of the selected few on whom it could rely to get its policies included in the suggested curriculum programs and activities. Secondly, the teacher training institutions were not adequately staffed due to the turn over rate of staff, poor salaries and conditions of work. Hence, the institutions depended on part time staff who were often busy and did not attend to their teaching responsibilities punctually and regularly (Informal interview with senior staff at the Teacher's Training College). Therefore, the teachers produced were not well equipped with the knowledge and pedagogical skills to implement the curriculum changes. In addition to the human resource problem, the institutions lacked basic and up to date texts, materials, equipment, and there was a deterioration of the physical structure - all contributing to the difficulties with the implementation of the programs. Further, the number of teachers graduating from the teacher's educational institutions was inadequate and decreased considerably during the past decade as indicated before.

A further point was that, the teachers were not responding positively to organized seminars on new curriculum programs. Informal interviews with curriculum specialists who conducted training seminars for teachers in the schools, indicated that their task was a frustrating one. They pointed out that teachers did not volunteer, but were selected by the head-teachers to attend the training sessions. Therefore, they unwillingly attended these seminars and as a result their participation was half-hearted or minimal. Furthermore, for a number of reasons, they failed to put into practice what they had learned. Another factor which added to the frustration of the curriculum specialists, was that sometimes, teachers who attended previous seminars never returned to continue their training because they had quit the job. This meant that the curriculum developers had to repeat the same exercise to newcomers.

The reluctance of the teachers to attend the seminars and to implement the new curriculum stemmed from the fact that, they were burdened with work due to the shortage of teachers in the schools, poor conditions of work and low salaries. For example, on September 20th, 1989, the Stabroek News reported that, the secondary schools needed 150 more teachers if the system was to be adequately staffed. The newspaper further reported that, 45 teachers resigned from 3 of the major secondary schools in Georgetown - namely 15 teachers including the headmaster of Queen's College, 20 from St. Roses and 10 from St. Joseph's. Three days later, the same newspaper commented that the Ministry of Education was concerned about the shortage of teachers and claimed if the pattern continued another 50-100 trained teachers would leave. By the end of the 1988-89 academic year, 426 teachers left the system through resignation and dismissals. Of these, 201 were trained and graduate teachers.

The Ministry of Education sadly reported that the secondary schools were understaffed by slightly below 50% and the situations was getting worse. This was witnessed one year later when there were over 500 vacancies for senior teachers including heads, deputies, senior and heads of department in the primary and secondary schools. To keep the system active, the Ministry of Education reverted to employ part time teachers, mainly university students. As of January 1990, there were 1,500 part time teachers in the system.

This situation resulted in the increase of untrained and inexperienced teachers in the schools. Although the situation was not so precarious in the first half of the 1980s, its impact later began to be spread throughout the system. In 1984, Ptolemy Reid, the then Prime Minister, in an address to the Guyana Teacher's Association bemoaned the problem of teacher shortage by noting that

> Despite the fact that formal training of teachers has been stepped up, we seem to be swimming against the tide with regards to the retention of trained and qualified teachers in our school system. The overall attrition rate among teachers is relatively high. At present, just 58% of our teachers are trained, and we are now faced with a situation of a gap between the demand for education to cater for our needs and the supply of qualified teachers. As a consequence, the efficiency of the education system is undermined and threatened. (P.A Reid: 1984:44)

The vacancy rate in the early 1990s reached an alarming figure of approximately 600 per annum and of February 1992, there were 696 vacancies for senior positions in the secondary schools alone. Of this amount, there were 222 vacant headships of schools, 44 vacancies for deputy heads, 175 for senior teachers, 179 for heads of subject and 70 for heads of department (Mirror: May 31,1992:8). Table 6.15 shows the intake and loss of teachers in 1983-1984 academic year and Table 6.16 shows the percentage of qualified teachers who left during the same academic year.

**TABLE 6.15 INTAKE AND LOSS OF TEACHERS AT THE VARIOUS LEVELS IN 1983-1984 ACADEMIC YEAR**

| School Level | Intake | Loss |
|---|---|---|
| Elementary | 744 | 968 |
| General Secondary | 253 | 389 |
| Community High School | 132 | 187 |
| Total | 1159 | 1544 |

**Source: Compiled from A Digest of Educational Statistics.**

**TABLE 6.16 NUMBER OF COLLEGE TRAINED AND UNIVERSITY GRADUATE TEACHERS WHO LEFT THE SCHOOLS IN 1983-1984 AT THE VARIOUS LEVELS**

| School Level | Teacher Loss | Teachers with College & university Qualifications | %age |
|---|---|---|---|
| Elementary | 968 | 408 | 42.15 |
| General Secondary | 389 | 217 | 55.7 |
| Community High School | 187 | 75 | 40.11 |

**Source: Compiled from A Digest of Educational Statistics.**

From Table 6.15, it can be observed that, at the end of the academic year there was a shortage of 385 teachers. While there was a higher percentage of females (67.46%) leaving their job at the primary level, the gender difference was not so great at the secondary level. At the CHS, the percentage was almost similar 49.73% males and 50.27% females, but at the general secondary schools, the males accounted for 55.78% of those who left the job while the females made up the remaining 44.22%.

When trained and experienced teacher left the system, it meant that inexperienced teachers were promoted to administrative positions which caused more serious problems in the educational system, especially in the implementation of curriculum reforms. Because of the shortage of teaching staff, heavy work load was experienced by those remaining in the system as classes with different abilities and age levels were combined, thus increasing the teacher student ratio (Informal discussions with Headteachers). This situation caused disciplinary problem and placed extra strain on teachers who avoided the unpleasant situation by absenting themselves from schools and eventually resigning.

Because of the low salaries which teachers received, they had to augment their incomes by engaging in part-time occupations, giving extra lessons, selling food items in schools and a few adventurous ones did cross-border trading on weekends and during the holiday periods. As a result of these activities, many teachers entered the schools exhausted, their interest was diverted and therefore could not perform their tasks efficiently.

Finance was also considered an important factor aiding or inhibiting curriculum changes. This became a major problem since 1976 because of the free education policy. This policy meant that the annual education budgets were thinly spread out at all levels in the system. This in effect, led to the deterioration of the entire system and the situation is unlikely to improve in the near future. The educational sector needs a massive infusion of financial resources, an infusion which the economy which had been weakened by the Government's policies, could ill afford.

Although in recent time, the Government changed its policy and was encouraging individuals to adopt schools and even suggesting that the establishment of private primary and secondary schools was possible, the offer was not taken up. The insecurity existed by those who previously owned schools and those who might be inclined to do so, that the Government, because of its dictatorial policy would confiscate their schools at any time in the future. In fact, when the denominational and privately operated schools were taken over by the Government in 1976, there was no consultation with the owners before this happened. The then Prime Minister (Burnham) announced his intention at a public rally in August of 1976 and by September, the policy became effective. Such action by Burnham was justified by the claim that the Government, despite its rigging of elections which gave it 70% of the votes in the 1973 elections, was responding to the demands of the population. In his speech at a special congress of the PNC in 1974, Burnham declared, "Now, the PNC holds over two-thirds of the seats in Parliament we can and will proceed with the implementation of our policy uninhibited and untrammelled" by opposing elements inside and outside the society (Declaration of Sophia: 1974:19).

This kind of undemocratic manner of determining major policies including policies in education, was one of the reasons why teachers perceived Government policy as a major inhibiting factor to curriculum changes. The coercion of teachers to participate in events such as attending political rallies, raising funds for schools, attending regional meetings, or to meet or put on shows for Heads of States, Government Members and party officials and policies which they did not support, was having a negative effect on the school system. In fact, the educational system tended to demand more political allegiance than teaching ability on the part of teachers and those who opposed the Government might be pressured into submission or resignation. Without a commitment to their jobs which entailed carrying out the policies and programs of the Government, teachers cannot give of their best. A system which permitted teachers to be transferred at the whims and fancies of the Government can be demoralizing because of the insecurity it breeds among teachers who technically can be sent to any part of the country if the Government so wishes. This can result in a vicious cycle in which unmotivated teachers produce under-motivated students.

Many teachers were in fact, engaged in a form of passive resistance (absenteeism, resignation, alienation) to the Government's educational policies which also contributed to a decline in the quality of the system. This absence of support also extended to many members of the society and became manifested in the lack of community or parental interest and support to these curriculum changes. In fact, the Director of the Curriculum Development Centre mentioned that parents, especially in the rural areas opposed the teaching of certain subjects on the curriculum such as cooperatives, agriculture, national policy and the participation in mass games, rallies and national service. The Director further reported that, according to the parents, these subjects were considered as means to politically indoctrinate or "brain wash" their children to the policies and programs of the Government which they did not necessarily support. In fact, 67% (27) of the administrative staff of the schools felt that these very subjects and extra curricular activities should be deleted from the curriculum.

Community involvement in school programs, including curriculum changes, was considered an inhibiting factor. This resulted from the fact that, parents felt that their contributions were not considered and they had no input or control of the decisions which were made by the Government.

In short, the politics in the school or political involvement of the Government in the affairs of schools was responsible for the lack of parental involvement and support of curriculum reforms. As mentioned before, parents tended to perceive Parent Teacher's meetings as fund raising ventures and therefore shied away from meetings or active participation.

The bureaucracy in the Ministry of Education was also considered by teachers as an inhibiting factor to curriculum reforms. As stated before, it was the officials within the Ministry and the curriculum specialists who largely determined what should be incorporated in the curriculum. Apart from their dominance in the process of curriculum development, the procedures, rules and regulations set down by the Ministry with which schools have to abide before textbooks, school supplies, payment of salary, appointment and promotion of teachers, and matters of urgency can be dealt with, tended to frustrate the efforts of teachers to discharge their duties effectively. What seemed perplexing was that, even within the Ministry of Education, internal communication, coordination and cooperation were seriously lacking (Informal interview with senior Planning Officer). In some instances, there was a clear lack of articulation of goals and tenacity of purpose between the Ministry of Education and the schools. Such structural administrative arrangements as existed between the Ministry and the Schools impeded rather than facilitated curriculum changes. In short, while the entire system operated, it seemed that the bureaucratic arrangement of the educational system appeared to be more dysfunctional to its efficient functioning.

Teachers also expressed dissatisfaction with their senior officers, namely the District School Supervisor or District Eduction Officer, who because of their authority, were quick to demonstrate that they had power. They often made inaccurate comments in their evaluation of schools. This was largely due to their inexperience in teaching and school administration and probably their lack of adequate professional and academic qualifications. Their unprofessional manner in dealing with teachers led to estranged relationship which was not appropriate for the smooth functioning of the system.

## Summary

This chapter demonstrated that the curriculum reforms introduced in the schools of Guyana, were largely determined by the PNC Government with a view to maintain control of the educational system and the programs and activities offered. That was the reason why, almost all the teachers were excluded from developing the curriculum and those specially selected for that purpose, were therefore preoccupied with developing programs of instructions which were in accordance with the national goals or policies as dictated by the PNC. This meant that no consideration was given to sub group differences or the interests of various groups in the society.

Because the curriculum was controlled from above, it was almost impossible for teachers to engage in or experiment with new pedagogies. This was partly the reason why a large number of teachers in the sample, claimed to have imparted low level cognitive skills to their students.

The diversification of the curriculum by the establishment of the Multi-lateral and Community High Schools and the introduction of the CXC, was not very successful for a number of reasons. Factors such as, the shortage of qualified and experienced teachers, inadequate finance to purchase the necessary texts, equipment, materials and other school supplies, lack of participation of teachers and parents and even the community in curriculum matters, the inflexible bureaucracy in education and the Government's interference in education, were all considered by teachers to inhibit curriculum reforms. The results were, a dramatic decline in the standard and quality of education offered, alienation experienced by teachers and parents, and a lack of confidence in the system. The decline in the standard and quality can be evident from the poor performance of secondary students at the CXC and GCE examinations.

The effects of the education system seemed to have grave consequences for the economic development of the country, largely due to the fact that the schools appeared to fail to produce an adequate supply of qualified individuals to occupy the professional, skilled and semi-skilled jobs in the country.

Although this study did not fully establish any direct correlation between the level of education acquired and increased production which is a prerequisite for economic development, the data presented in this chapter, seemed to suggest that the level of cognitive or technical competencies which are mostly achieved through education and training, and apparently lacking in the country, might have affected the level of production and thus, development. However, the new political culture created by the PNC Government and which pervaded a wide cross section of the society, was a major contributory factor to the socio-economic problems facing the entire country, including the education system.

# CHAPTER 7

## CONCLUSION

The study tried to examine the role of education and specifically the curriculum changes introduced by the Burnham Government in Guyana between 1965 to 1985. In this effort, it described the social, political and economic developments that occurred during this period as a backdrop to the content and process of curriculum changes which took place under the Burnham's regime. Secondly, an attempt was made to seek the views of a group of practising teachers and school administrators about these changes.

From 1965 to 1985, the PNC Government changed the structure of the school system and the curriculum. For instance, in 1976 the Government assumed full responsibility for education from nursery to university and no tuition was charged. This inevitably led the Government to exercise full control over the curriculum and the educational system.

The findings revealed that the educational system in Guyana during the period 1965 to 1985, was increasingly centralized in the Ministry of Education and all major decisions were made by the Government through its Minister of Education and other administrative staff. This centralization of power in the hands of the PNC Government made it possible for national control to be concentrated in the hands of a few selected Government officials and away from the influence of the majority. This step was symbolic of the fact that, the political culture of the PNC was neither for or of the masses. This largely originated from the fact that the Government lacked the general political support of the masses and kept itself in office by rigged elections. In its pursuit of such centrally controlled policy not only in education, the PNC created a political culture in which the State practised oppression, fear and tyranny.

This political culture was created through the declaration of the "paramountcy of the PNC Party" whereby the Party had ascendency over the State, economy, State sector workers, trade union council, mass media and education and the election commissions. Such measures helped to ensure that the PNC continued to hold power for over a quarter of a century.

In addition to the fact that PNC held on to power through fraudulent means, its political dominance tended to affect almost all aspects of life in the society. Nevertheless, there were some degree of autonomy which existed in the civil society. This was particularly so in the agriculture sector of the economy which was dominated by peasant farmers, and other religious and professional groups and a few trade unions such as GAWU, UGSA and CCWU. But despite these, the PNC's desire to control the State and it apparatuses and the bureaucracies in order to serve its interests, resulted in (a) racial discrimination against non Afro-groups, (b) controlling the commanding heights of the economy which showed a marked decline primarily due to mismanagement and inefficiencies, (c) deteriorating socio-economic conditions which produced a reduction in Government revenues and this consequently led to a fall in the expenditures on education and other social services, (d) high infant mortality rates, (e) mass migration/brain drain, (f) a strong parallel (black) market, (g) corruption, (h) nepotism and (i) violation of human rights.

Despite these adverse outcomes, the PNC Government was still hoping that the education that was being provided and the curriculum and extra curricula activities that it introduced in schools would create positive attitudes and commitment, especially among the young, to its policies and programs. However, this was not realized and as a result, the PNC came to rely very heavily on the RSA to maintain social control and dominance.

The PNC's imposed structure of political domination was reflected in its control of the education system. The content, pedagogical styles and forms of evaluation within the educational setting all functioned, in part, as message systems to distribute and reinforce the submission of the teachers to the will of the PNC. The power of teachers as a professional group was grossly undermined through a general lack of opportunity to participate in the kind of decision-making that directly affected their lives both inside and outside the school. This was because the most crucial decisions that affected their roles as teachers, were made by the centralized bureaucracy in the Ministry of Education which was ultimately controlled by the PNC. This adversely affected their ability to influence curriculum changes and they therefore felt professionally thwarted by a policy which left them with almost no scope for participation.

Curriculum development personnel often claimed that they did involve teachers in the curriculum development process and further maintained that, they did not dictate to teachers about what they were to teach and how they were to teach it. Rather, they claimed that they presented what were in effect no more than curriculum guides or guidelines which teachers were expected to modify in accordance to the needs of their students. However, the teachers often followed the supposed guidelines as directions of an authoritarian and punitive Government. Further, many of them did not have the knowledge or skills to make the necessary modifications to the program of instruction with which they were presented.

Only a small minority of teachers who might have specialized qualifications and very often drawn from the City of Georgetown were sometimes asked to participate in the curriculum development process. "Grass roots" participation involving the majority of teachers including those in the rural areas was never sought. Of course, it can be contended that it is unreasonable to expect all teachers to participate in the process due to technical and financial difficulties. But, even those who participated were not a representative of the larger body of teachers. They were "hand picked' and fully supported the policies and ideologies of the ruling PNC.

While teachers charged with the responsibilities of administering Government's educational programs were likely to support the PNC Government, there were overt and covert means among teachers and students in displaying their opposition to such programs. For example, overt opposition was witnessed in the one month teacher's strike called by the Corentyne Branch of the Guyana Teacher's Union in 1976 in protest to the Government politicising the formation of a "Hindu Society" in one of the high schools on the Corentyne. Further in 1980, teachers and students in the City of Georgetown protested the Ministry of Education for the dismissals of three teachers who were alleged to be supporters of the Working People's Alliance party, headed by Drs. Rodney and Roopnarine and the transfer of the Headmistress of a senior secondary school (St. Roses).

In regard to covert opposition, this took the form of passive resistance by means of resignation, absenteeism and alienation of teachers, and for the students it was manifested by high levels of absenteeism, indiscipline, vandalism and drop out rates at both the elementary and secondary levels.

The continual dominance and control over all aspects of education by State and the PNC, not only affected teachers, but even the masses were often confused and passive, but surprisingly, they did not engage openly in any form of frequent opposition to some of these new educational policies. However, even if certain interest groups were disenchanted or dissatisfied with the education offered, it was unconstitutional or illegal to operate private schools in the country. Therefore, Guyanese had no choice but to tacitly accept the educational policies and hoped that their children can benefit in some way or the other from the education offered. Freire (1973: 60) describing the nature of oppressed people commented "the more they accept the passive role imposed on them, the more they tend to adapt to the world as it is and to the fragmented view of reality deposited on them".

This study threw light on the fact that curriculum reforms in Guyana, were aimed at ensuring that both students and teachers developed an understanding of the type of society into which they had to fit or to which they had to adapt even if this meant modifying their perceptions of their own realities.

By virtue of the State controlling the political and economic forces in the country, it made it possible for the dominant PNC to attempt to control the "mental production" of the society, and thus, the schools were used as part of the ideological state apparatus to pass on their world view, including the type of knowledge which tended to reinforce and consolidate the existing social order structured in their interests. In other words, the curriculum reforms were used in an attempt to strengthen the domination of the PNC and to shore up its legitimacy. In short, implementing the new curriculum was not only an activity of knowledge and skill processing, but it was also a means of "people processing" in order to maintain the dominance of the PNC. But, this process was not very successful, and hence, the PNC relied heavily on the RSA to maintain control of the society by incarcerating or annihilating opposing elements in the society. Rodney is a classic example.

This research revealed that the PNC was unable to make any dramatic departure from the colonial system of education, particularly where the methodology of teaching was concerned. This was evident from the fact that, students in the post-colonial era continued to be taught low level cognitive skills and rote learning or memorization of facts were a common feature in the teaching/learning process. The emphasis on such pedagogical styles was a reflection of the type of relationships and behaviours for which the schools prepared the students. That was the reason why a technical approach to curriculum planning was adopted to create passive recipients of information. Students were deprived of the opportunity to reflect on and interpret the information or to discover the meanings of the world in which they found themselves. Schooling in Guyana was synonymous to a "black box" bleached of all forms of "subjectivity" and "humanity". Students were not taught how to learn. They were considered passive objects and not active subjects. The development of critical thinking skills would have empowered the students to emancipate themselves from domination, but this would have been inconsistent with the *modus operandi* of the PNC.

The curriculum reforms reflected the needs of the PNC to maintain control over the population and disseminate its political ideology. As a consequence of its control of all aspects of education, the Government was determined to inculcate patterns of behaviour in the Guyanese students which supported its political strategies for its type of national development. Further, the lack of facilities which affected the successful implementation of curriculum reforms seemed to have resulted in low academic performance. This was evident from the large number of secondary students failing to acquire satisfactory passes at the CXC and GCE examinations.

Although both the political control of the PNC and the lack of facilities seemed to have affected the standard of the education offered during the Burnham era, the research did not have sufficient data to fully demonstrate precisely the relative importance of these two factors on the quality and outcomes of the education provided in the Guyanese society. Further research in this area is therefore needed.

The Government had as its alleged goal the feeding, clothing and housing of the nation. In this regard, the curriculum in the primary and secondary schools emphasized instructions in agriculture and cooperatives. The objectives were to train the citizens to produce enough food to supply the domestic market and to develop a taste for food produced locally. However, there was little evidence to show that these activities were successful. Instead, the over emphasis on agriculture in the curriculum and the inculcation of values for manual work appeared to be the hidden agenda designed to continue keeping the working class students in low status jobs.

It is argued that, it is meaningless to teach youths the dignity of labour and working with their hands in a socio-structural context where the highest wages and salaries are earned by those who do not have to soil their hands and where such wage differentials in favour of those with an academic education, are reportedly high. For example, the lowest category of public servants earns about eight times more than someone who does manual labour. Unless structural changes in terms of wage differentials occur at the societal level, it cannot be expected that students will develop positive attitudes towards agriculture and other menial jobs in the society.

The curriculum of the schools was also to develop a new Guyanese citizen as defined by the PNC. To achieve this goal, great emphasis was placed on moral training of students not necessarily based on religious teachings but one which was to provide them with undivided loyalty and commitment to the

State and the PNC party. In addition, the curriculum placed much focus on the political socialization of the youth through mass games and national service activities. Further, guidance and counselling in the curriculum was to condition the students to accept their subservient role in the society as inevitable and desirable.

But while guidance and counselling was aimed at developing subservience among students attending the lower quality secondary schools, the PNC was interested in creating a new group or cadre of elites to succeed them. In this regard, the President's College was established, and in addition to it being furnished with all modern facilities, the teacher:student ratio was also very low in comparison with all other schools in the country. However, this is a major contradiction to the alleged socialist policy of the PNC.

A major diversification of the curriculum was attempted at the secondary level by the establishment of Community and Multi-lateral High schools to provide technical and vocational training so that students can be equipped with appropriate skills and dispositions needed for economic development. In more specific terms, the technical/vocational training promised to provide students with a more practical, useful and productive education so that it would not only render them ready for employment after school, but also enhance the country's return on its educational investment. The commonly held expectation was that, the return on such investment will increase the level of employment, diversify services and increase productivity and socio-economic growth in the society.

However, as demonstrated in this study, these curriculum changes failed to achieve their goals for many reasons including the lack of specialist teachers and finances to fully equip the schools with the materials and other resources needed to implement the various programs. The hope of these schools was that their graduates would create their own employment opportunities. But this did not materialize. In fact, persistent and growing unemployment in the society was the result of the stagnant or declining economy and a host of other problems associated with the authoritarian control of the PNC.

In addition, these schools did not carry the same status as the grammar secondary schools because technical and vocational subjects were considered as lower level education. One can assume therefore, that these schools act as a "cooling out process" aimed at restricting the occupational aspirations and expectations of students attending them. Further, a large number of graduates from these schools often did not receive the same remuneration as those who had "academic" qualifications. The outcome was that, students were not inclined to pursue the technical and vocational training offered in these schools.

The CXC examination was introduced to replace the GCE examinations and was designed to indigenize secondary education in the Caribbean and Guyana. This was particularly important to the PNC as a result of its non-aligned international political policy and locally, for the fostering of a new socio-economic system of "Co-operative Socialism". But, many students and parents still regarded the overseas examinations from Britain as of superior value. In fact, up to 1985, a large number of Guyanese students wrote both sets of examinations ie. the GCE and CXC. In addition to the continued preference for the GCE, the implementation of the CXC in Guyana faced many problems which resulted in the poor performance of students.

In summary, it became clear from this research that regardless of the political ideology of the PNC and its influence on the curriculum, if Guyanese did not have the basic necessities of life such as adequate food, the pursuit of democracy, freedom of speech and human rights, and they continued to face declining socio-economic conditions, no change in the education system and school curriculum could have improved the learning and living conditions of the people. Faced with high unemployment, a declining economy and an unmanageable foreign debt, Guyana showed little progress in terms of improving the quality of life of the population since mid 1970s. It seemed that the people lost their will for achievement under a repressive form of political control.

## Summary and Conclusion

This research demonstrated that the curriculum development process in Guyana was under control of the Government officials at the Curriculum Development Centre. These officials were mandated by the PNC Government to develop programs and activities with a view to propagating its interest and most importantly, as a means to maintain its legitimacy. In this regard, the majority of the teachers and other members of the public were, for the most part, not involved in this process in any meaningful way.

Second, national goals, policies and programs took priority over varied interests of individuals and sub-groups in the society and this was reflected in the new curriculum. This meant that the curriculum did not incorporate sub-group differences such as individual, religious/cultural, ethnic and regional in the society. This was largely due to the fact that, the PNC was using the curriculum to maintain social control at the national level and shore up its legitimacy.

Third, students were not developing high level cognitive skills in the school system such as critical, analytical, interpretative etc. This would have been incompatible with the passive and docile role the PNC was attempting to create among a wide cross section of the masses.

Fourth, the lack of qualified and experienced teachers, the unwillingness of senior teachers to undergo retraining, and the inability of the teacher training institutions to produce teachers to adequately staff the schools, inhibited curriculum reforms. The shortage of qualified and experienced teachers was also due to low salaries and conditions of work. Further, they were expected to undertake programs and activities to which they did not fully subscribe. These factors led to the low morale of teachers. Since the teacher training institutions were ill equipped to produce teachers who were professionally well prepared for their tasks, the ill prepared teachers were unable to implement the curriculum reforms successfully which in effect led to the production of poorly educated students. Good quality education is not possible without good quality teacher.

Fifth, it was found that there existed a wide discrepancy between the goals of the Government as enunciated in the curriculum and the resources to implement them. It is important to note, that this situation is not typical to Guyana, since almost all developing countries and even the developed ones do not have adequate resources to successfully implement their educational programs. However, while in Guyana the policy makers insisted that the goals be achieved for the development of the society, the implementers or teachers were ill prepared for this task and did not have the necessary tools, equipment, materials and text books. This was due to the lack of adequate finance which was a result of the declining economy.

Sixth, as a consequence of the two preceding factors, students' performance at the national and international examinations was poor. This had serious consequences for the manpower requirements of the society, since the individuals leaving secondary and even primary schools were deficient in certain basic skills to fill the various occupational roles in the society. In addition, the low academic performance of students, especially at the secondary level, meant that the majority of graduates did not have the knowledge and skills for advanced studies locally and abroad.

Seventh, since the school system was failing to equip students with the necessary skills, public confidence in the educational system was decreasing. This was evident from the kinds of comments that were made in the local newspapers and even in the State Paper on Education Policy in 1990. It is important to note that, this lack of public confidence in or the disenchantment with the educational system is not only peculiar to the Guyanese society, but the same concern is expressed by influential groups in the developed democratic societies such as the United States of America, Canada and England.

Eight, Lack of parental or community participation or involvement in the activities of schools and the curriculum development process, was considered a major factor inhibiting curriculum changes. This was strongly expressed by 24% of both categories of teachers in the sample and in interviews with other education officials. The lack of community participation had been the outcome of educational programs being handed down from the Ministry of Education or the Government. Because the curriculum reform for "national development" as defined by the PNC Government was imposed upon the masses, it came to be regarded as an infringement on their values and way of life. The result was alienation from the school system.

Ninth, the bureaucracy of the Ministry of Education and even in the schools was also considered by 16% of the teachers in the sample as a major factor inhibiting curriculum changes. This bureaucracy meant that communication for the most part was from top to bottom. Therefore, the majority of teachers, students and even parents did not participate in the decision-making process in the schools nor with the Ministry of Education. This bureaucratic approach to curriculum development led to an ignorance on the part of the teachers of the overall rationale of the school's prescribed curriculum. Further, many teachers objected to their training in national policy and national service activities which was designed to teach them to accept the superordinate/subordinate relations in the schools and even the society and the sanctity of the dominant social values, norms and rules of the PNC.

Tenth, poor governmental policies and arbitrary political interference in education were also considered to inhibit curriculum changes. This negative response to curriculum changes by 18% of both categories of teachers in the sample was largely due to the fact that they did not fully support the educational policies. This was especially so in regard to those subjects and activities which the Government implemented in the school system for political socialization/ indoctrination purposes, aimed at developing a commitment to the PNC, among the young. The teachers also objected to the Government's interference in the affairs of schools through such activities as the transferring, firing and promoting of teachers as a part of its policies of victimization and the discrimination against them, especially in cases where particular teachers did not support the policies of the Government.

## Recommendations

This study is not the type that easily gives rise to solutions. Indeed, the problems it discussed were large and solutions which suggested themselves were obviously of a political nature. However, in view of the major findings of this study, the following recommendations are being suggested to improve the implementation of educational programs including curriculum reforms to be supported and possibly, successful. But the ultimate improvement of the solution would depend on the introduction of major political changes in the country.

The fundamental problem of the Guyanese society during the period of the study and which was mentioned consistently in this research, was a lack of democracy and therefore, legitimacy of the existing authorities. The PNC Government, used the educational system in an attempt to build up some form of legitimacy. But since this failed, it began to rely heavily on the army and other paramilitary organizations and the judicial system to maintain control and dominance. In this regard, it is therefore obvious that, political democracy needs to be restored in the society and the democratization process diffused into the other major socio-cultural and economic institutions. By democratizing the society, the educational system will be less authoritarian and to a large extent, become administratively a more autonomous institution.

In other words, the most favourable medium in which curriculum reforms can take place is one in which free and open discussions and real participation can be institutionalized. It can be expected that, participation in the curriculum development process will provide a genuine learning experience, not only for curriculum specialists and Government officials, but teachers and students, parents and other members of the community. In short, the process of democratization and participation in education decision making will lead to the empowerment of teachers, students and parents in the educational system. Further, such process can lead to more consensus in the society, and thus, might result in the

Government spending less funds on the RSA to maintain social order - funds which can be spent on education or other viable economic activities.

However, it is useless to talk about democratizing education unless this is seen as part and parcel of the democratization of society itself. Democracy has to be lived and not rhetorically espoused as the PNC attempted to do, before it can meaningfully become an active form of Government.

2) Emerging out of the first recommendation, is the need for a change, not only from a situation where a few individuals make overall decisions to one in which the classroom teachers and students are involved and being cognisant of decisions made about the curriculum, but they need to be actual participants in the curriculum development process itself. All teachers should be involved at a strategic as well as at a tactical level in this process. Strategic decisions are those which have school wide implications. For example, decisions concerning the philosophy of the school's curriculum, its aims, the rationale for selecting the particular content to be taught and the kind of learning experiences which are considered best for attaining the objectives of the curriculum. The data needed for such decision making would be arrived at from a situational analysis rather than those derived at the national level. Tactical decisions are those which are more local and can be

made at the school level, eg., the specific objectives, learning experiences and content that each curriculum area would use in order to attain the overall objectives of the school. Further, every student needs to know what the curriculum of schools entails and to be provided with a rationale which enables him/her to see how each task he/she is required to do in school fits into the larger curriculum framework.

3) There is the need to conduct an on-going re-assessment of curriculum reforms in the light of changing circumstances, inside and outside the schools. For instance, parents should be able to bring to the attention of the Ministry of Education, needs that have arisen in the community which the school curriculum ought to meet. The matter can be referred to the Curriculum Development Centre, and steps need to be taken to consult the opinions of all the teachers, parents and students in order to get a feedback to determine whether to implement the recommendations or not.

More importantly, the implementation process should be made flexible in order to permit a two-way communication system which would accommodate the views of classroom teachers and individuals higher in the educational system. Flexibility in the education structure would also create an atmosphere conducive to increased commitment and cooperation among various participants which is a necessary condition for the successful implementation of curriculum reforms.

In addition, the communities must be consulted on all proposed curriculum reforms to ensure their acceptance before implementation. Also, it would be useful for the community to be aware of plans for education by the dissemination of information to the public and given the opportunity to be involved in the execution of these plans so that their confidence in the system can be built.

4) Since the financing of education is the responsibility of the central Government and there is no guarantee that more funds can be available for education due to the current economic crisis, the Ministry of Education has to help enlighten the people to make choices about which programs and activities they would like to cut so that the limited resources can be utilized on those programs in which priority should be given. National Service and Mass Games might be seen as areas which need to be abandoned. For instance, the Government spent a large amount of public funds (G$ 20-50 million annually on Guyana National Service alone excluding Mass Games) on these activities, funds which could have been spent on a planned program of physical exercises, athletics and organized games which deteriorated immensely over the years.

However, the National Service activities were considered an important ideological instrument of the PNC and it was prepared to siphon off funds from economic activities to support them. As a consequence, the country continues to be undeveloped and underdeveloped because the Government borrowed large amounts of money internally and internationally to balance the budgets which funded such unprofitable activities as mass games and national service.

5) To ensure adequate and substantial supply of teachers in the system for the successful implementation of curriculum reforms, the Ministry of Education should make it a priority to train all the unqualified teachers on an "in-service" basis ie. provide training during the summer vacation to upgrade their knowledge base and teaching strategies. In fact, there is the need for the training of all teachers before they begin with the actual implementation of curriculum reforms. Further, to attract graduate and qualified teachers in the system, they should be adequately paid and receive other fringe benefits, given to other public servants. Their conditions of work need to be improved. These should include better building, more space, equipment, facilities, smaller classes, updated texts, journals, magazines, etc. In addition, teachers should be promoted on merit based upon their competencies and experiences rather than political affiliation.

6) Positive efforts need to be made to educate parents, employers and other members of the community towards an acceptance of the new subject areas, especially technical and vocational subjects, as well as, new types of assessment and certification. A greater involvement of the teaching

profession in decision-making at the Curriculum Development Centre and even of the Parent Teacher's Associations will provide a forum for orienting parent, employers and other community members towards the rationale for technical and vocational training and the CXC. Unless this is done, students will not be inclined to do technical and vocational subjects and the public will be still apprehensive about the value of the CXC examinations.

7) In order to restore some degree of confidence in the educational system, the Ministry of Education must be prepared and willing to listen to the concerns of the parents and other members of the community with a view to changing existing plans if necessary. Ideas that emerged from the Parent Teacher's Associations must have a channel for reaching those who manage education and there must be a belief that a response will be forthcoming. Satisfied parents can enhance the chances of success of any education program including curriculum reforms.

8) The willingness on the part of the Ministry of Education to respond promptly to the concerns, problems and suggestions of teachers and more flexibility of the bureaucracy within the Ministry, can be a positive step to maintain good relationship, not only among officials in the Ministry, but with teachers. This can also be of tremendous assistance to curriculum reforms.

9) Finally, there is the need to change the philosophical

approach to curriculum development. Instead of the continual reliance on the technical approach, the phenomenological and critical paradigms will provide new insights into the interpretative/situational and dialogical processes of curriculum development. This will certainly provide students and the masses with the necessary knowledge and skills to take control of their own lives.

# GLOSSARY

| | |
|---|---|
| *Amerindian* | The indigenous people of Guyana |
| *Afro-Guyanese* | Same as Black, Guyanese of African descent |
| *Co-Operative Socialism* | A political and economic system enunciated by Burnham in which emphasis was to be placed on the use of the co-operative as an instrument of development or in the thrust towards socialism or the socialist transformation of the society. According to Singh (1988), the PNC leadership was attracted to co-operative socialism because it was an innocuous form of socialism: one that was claiming indigenous roots, that did not promise to embrace the Soviet block, and therefore, one that would not provoke a strong reaction from the United States. This brand of socialism bore a strong resemblance to Ujamaa (villagization) that Julius Nyerere was practising in Tanzania in the 1960s. |
| *Cuffy Ideological Institute* | This institute funded by the PNC Government, was established specifically to provide ideological orientation or training to "comrades" (party personnel, managers, school administrators, public servants, military personnel etc.) in the theory and practice of socialism and to contribute to national development by study and manual work. The ideological training was considered very important so that members of the PNC party must develop emotional attachment and loyalty to the "charismatic" leader -Burnham. In other words, the institute was also effective in developing a "personality cult" ie. conforming absolute power to Burnham. |
| *Curriculum* | Planned and unplanned program of activities to enable students to acquire the necessary skills, knowledge, values, attitudes and dispositions for life and living |
| *Curriculum Reform* | and Curriculum Change will be used interchangeably. |

| | |
|---|---|
| *Guyana National Service* | This paramilitary institution, established in 1974 with training centres in the interior of Guyana, was designed to impart technical and vocational skills, military training and ideological preparation which the PNC felt was essential for building socialism. As an ideological enterprise, it had been extended into the elementary and secondary schools and other post secondary educational institutions and government agencies. Participation was compulsory and was used as a prerequisite for placement in schools or training institutions and jobs. University students must complete one year of national service and so do teachers and nurses but on shorter duration, before being awarded their certificates, degrees and diplomas. |
| *Kuru Kuru Co-operative College* | This funded PNC residential college, was established in 1973 to train managers, party members, school administrators, public servants and military and paramilitary personnel to propagate the ideology of co-operativism ie. the ways by which co-operatives (both theory and practice) can be used as a vehicle for the development or socialist re-organization of the society. The trainees were exposed to work experience conducted on agricultural farms and other work related areas such as mechanical, construction and maintenance. Burnham seemed very pleased with the training offered when he commented " It would do you heart good to see a number of Public Servants, including Permanent Secretaries, rising early in the morning, doing their callisthenics, tending the fields, planting, cleaning up and then proceeding to attend lectures and discussions." (Burnham: 1974:14) |
| *Indo-Guyanese* | Same as Indian or East Indian, Guyanese of Indian descent |
| *Mass Games* | This activity was patterned after the North Korean ceremonial cultural display of coordinating physical and musical activities. In Guyana, a Mass Games secretariat was established in 1982 with various designated departments such as training, choreography, music, design, costumes and props to coordinate the variety of activities. Students, teachers, education and other |

military and paramilitary personnel trained two days a week from October to December and all five days of the school week from January to February to become perfect in whatever they were supposed to display. The activities of the games were in consonance with the aims and objectives of education which were enunciated by the Ministry of Education and the PNC Government and had various themes. For example, the themes for 1984 were: Advancing the Co-operative Republic of Guyana through Education and Congratulating the Comrade Leader (Burnham) on his 61 st. Birthday. The activities of the games culminated in a colourful display to commemorate the Republican Status of the country.

*Mixed* Offspring from two or more different races

*Paramountcy of the Party* This is a doctrinal principle which made the PNC Party the dominant institution in the Guyanese society. In his "Declaration of Sophia" address, Burnham (1974:11) declared that "the Party should assume unapologetically its paramountcy over the Government which is merely one of its executive arms". The Party further ensured that it had dominance over State institutions. According to Burnham (1974:31), "the Party must be highly organized and well trained to mobilize the nation, give leadership to the people and identify and rout the enemy regardless of the guise in which he clothes himself". The primary aim of all members must be loyalty to the Party which in effect meant Burnham. This doctrine formally signified the end of liberal democracy in Guyana during the Burnham era and it also implied that as a major national institution, the PNC could not be replaced at least not by constitutional or electoral means.

*Technical Vocational Program* Programs directed at training students to acquire the necessary skills for specific jobs. They include courses in craft, woods, agriculture, office practice, type-writing, business studies etc.

# ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| ACEO | Assistant Chief Education Officer |
| BHS | Bishop's High School |
| CARICOM | Caribbean Common Market |
| CARIFTA | Caribbean Free Trade Association |
| CCWU | Clerical and Commercial Worker's Union |
| CDC | Community Development Centre |
| CEO | Chief Education Officer |
| CHS | Community High School |
| CPE | College of Preceptor's Examination |
| CXC | Caribbean Examination Council |
| DCEO | Deputy Chief Education Officer |
| DEO | District Education Officer |
| GAWU | Guyana Agricultural Worker's Union |
| GCE | General Certificate of Education |
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| GHRA | Guyana Human Rights Association |
| GMWU | Guyana Mine Worker's Union |
| GNP | Gross National Product |
| GNS | Guyana National Service |
| HCT | Human Capital Theory |
| IBRD | International Bank for Reconstruction & Development |
| IDA | International Development Agency |
| IMF | International Monetary Fund |
| ISA | Ideological State Apparatus |

| | |
|---|---|
| LDC | Less Developed Country |
| MDC | More Developed Country |
| MHS | Multi-lateral High School |
| NAFFAT | National Fourth Form Achievement Test |
| NCERD | National Council for Education Research and Development |
| NACCIE | National Association of Agricultural, Clerical and Industrial Employees |
| PC | President's College |
| PCE | Preliminary Certificate Examination |
| PNC | People's National Congress |
| PPP | People's Progressive Party |
| PSM | Public Service Ministry |
| PSU | Public Service Union |
| PTA | Parent Teacher's Association |
| QC | Queen's College |
| RSA | Repressive State Apparatus |
| SBA | School Base Assessment |
| SPSS | Special Package for the Social Sciences |
| SSEE | Secondary School Entrance Examination |
| SSPE | Secondary School Proficiency Examination |
| TSC | Teaching Service Commission |
| TTC | Teacher's Training College |
| TUC | Trade Union Congress |
| UF | United Force |
| UG | University of Guyana |

| | |
|---|---|
| UGSA | University of Guyana Staff Association |
| UK | United Kingdom |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNESCO | United Nation Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| USA | United States of America |
| USSR | United Soviet Socialist Republic |

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Thunder.

## APPENDIX I

## QUESTIONNAIRE
## (Teachers)

The purpose of this exercise is to get your opinion on the various issues on curriculum reforms that have been implemented in the school system since independence. There is no right or wrong answer, however, you are to think carefully before answering the questions. It is hoped that you will give sincere answers otherwise the entire exercise will not be very useful. You can be assured that your confidentiality will be safeguarded.

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1. In your opinion, why were curriculum reforms/changes introduced in Guyana ?

   -----------------------------------------------------------------
   -----------------------------------------------------------------
   -----------------------------------------------------------------

2. Who would you say had been mainly responsible for Curriculum development ?

   -----------------------------------------------------------------
   -----------------------------------------------------------------
   -----------------------------------------------------------------

3. Do you think that the present curriculum offered in your school reflects the needs of the society ?
   Yes [] No [] Please give reasons for your answer.

   -----------------------------------------------------------------
   -----------------------------------------------------------------
   -----------------------------------------------------------------

4. Would you say that the curriculum for schools in Guyana reflects the government policies ?
   Yes [] No []

5. (a) What subject(s) in your opinion reflect(s) most of the goals of the government ?

   ------------- ------------- ------------ ------------

   (b) Why do you think so ?

   -----------------------------------------------------------------
   -----------------------------------------------------------------
   -----------------------------------------------------------------

6. In what extra-curricula activities do you and your students participate ?

____________________________________________
____________________________________________
____________________________________________

7. Are these extra-curricular activities compulsory ?
Yes [] No []

8. Is the present curriculum providing the necessary knowledge, skills, values and attitudes for economic development ?

____________________________________________
____________________________________________
____________________________________________

If yes, how ?

____________________________________________
____________________________________________
____________________________________________

9. List four factors within your school or from your teaching experience which aid curriculum changes.

(1) ____________________ (3) ____________________
(2) ____________________ (4) ____________________

10. List six problems within your school or from your teaching experience which inhibit curriculum changes.

(1) ____________________ (4) ____________________
(2) ____________________ (5) ____________________
(3) ____________________ (6) ____________________

11. List four factors outside your school or from your teaching experience which aid curriculum changes.

(1) ____________________ (3) ____________________
(2) ____________________ (4) ____________________

12. List four factors outside your school or from your teaching experience which inhibit changes in curriculum.

(1) ____________________ (3) ____________________
(2) ____________________ (4) ____________________

13. Beside each of the statements presented below, please indicate whether you Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD) or are Undecided (U).

| | | SA | A | D | SD | U |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (a) | Parents should be involved in the planning of curriculum for schools. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (b) | Students should be involved in the planning of curriculum. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (c) | Teachers should plan the curriculum for students. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (d) | Only curriculum specialists should select materials and plan the curriculum. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (e) | The government should decide what is best to be included in the curriculum. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (f) | In planning the curriculum, considerations should be given to the following factors: | | | | | |
| | (1) Political | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| | (2) Economic | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| | (3) Socio-cultural | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (g) | When thinking about curriculum reform we cannot cater for differences in the following areas. | | | | | |
| | (1) Individual | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| | (2) Social Class | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| | (3) Religious | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| | (4) Ethnic | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| | (5) Gender | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| | (6) Regional | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (h) | The curriculum reforms from 1965-1985 assisted the students to acquire the appropriate knowledge, skills and disposition for capital accumulation. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (i) | Some subjects on the curriculum are used as a means of political socialization. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

## PEDAGOGIC STYLE

14. In your opinion, do you or your colleagues' teaching styles being influenced by any philosophical considerations ?
Yes ☐ No ☐ Please provide an explanation for your answer ?

15. What are some of the skills you are imparting to your students ?

16. Form your observations and experiences, what is the dominant teaching style in your school ?

## DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

In this section we would like to find out more about yourself as a teacher. Please answer the questions to the best of your knowledge.

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Gender | Male | ☐ | Female | ☐ |
| 2. | Age | Below 20 yrs. | ☐ | 20-25 yrs. | ☐ |
| | | 26-30 yrs. | ☐ | 31-35 yrs. | ☐ |
| | | 36-40 yrs. | ☐ | 41-45 yrs. | ☐ |
| | | 46-50 yrs. | ☐ | 51-55 yrs. | ☐ |
| | | Over 55 yrs. | ☐ | | |
| 3. | Ethnicity | East Indian | ☐ | African | ☐ |
| | | Chinese | ☐ | Mixed/Colored | ☐ |
| | | Amerindian | ☐ | Other | ☐ |
| 4. | Marital Status | Single | ☐ | Married | ☐ |
| | | Divorced | ☐ | Other | ☐ |

5. Religion
   Christian ☐ Hindu ☐
   Muslim ☐ Other ☐

6. Place of Birth Rural ☐ Urban ☐

7. Place grew up Rural ☐ Urban ☐

8. Academic qualifications:
   (a) School Leaving Certificate ☐
   (b) College of Perceptions ☐
   (c) General Certificate of Education ☐
   (d) Caribbean Examination Council Exam ☐
   (e) Class 1, Grade 1 ☐
   (f) Degree ☐
   (g) Diploma ☐
   (h) Post graduate, M.A. ☐

9. How long have your been teaching?
   Less than 3 years ☐ 4-6 years ☐
   7-9 years ☐ 10-12 years ☐
   12-15 years ☐ Over 15 years ☐

10. Present salary
   Less than $1,000 pm ☐
   $1,001 - $1,500 pm ☐
   $1,501 - $2,000 pm ☐
   $2,001 - $2,500 pm ☐
   Over $2,500 pm ☐

Your assistance in this exercise has been tremendous and your cooperation is very much appreciated.

# APPENDIX II

## QUESTIONNAIRE
## (Administration Staff)

The purpose of this exercise is to get your opinion on the various issues on curriculum reforms that have been implemented in the school system since independence. There is no right or wrong answer, however, you are to think carefully before answering the questions. It is hoped that you will give sincere answers otherwise the entire exercise will not be very useful. You can be assured that your confidentiality will be safeguarded.

---

1. Why were curriculum reforms introduced in Guyana ?

   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________

2. What do you think are the basic goals of curriculum reforms in Guyana ?

   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________

3. Are the curriculum reforms achieving these goals ?
   Yes ☐ No ☐
   Please explain why you think so.

   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________

4. Is the curriculum designed by the Ministry of Education adapted to suit your school situation ? Is so, to what extent ?

   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________

   If not, Why ?

   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________

5. What would you like to see included or deleted from the curriculum of your school ?

Included:

Deleted:

6. Do you or any of your staff assist in the selection of materials and planning of curriculum ?
Yes ☐ NO ☐ If yes, explain in what ways.

7. In your opinion, what are four factors within your school or from your teaching experience which aid curriculum changes ?

(1) ------------------ (3) --------------------
(2) ------------------ (4) --------------------

8. In your opinion, what are six problems within your school or in your teaching experience which inhibit curriculum changes ?

(1) ------------------- (4) --------------------
(2) ------------------- (5) --------------------
(3) ------------------- (6) --------------------

9. In your opinion, what are four factors outside your school or from your teaching experience which aid curriculum changes ?

(1) ------------------ (3) --------------------
(2) ------------------ (4) --------------------

10. In your opinion, what are six problems outside your school or from your teaching experience which inhibit changes in curriculum ?

(1) ------------------- (4) --------------------
(2) ------------------- (5) --------------------
(3) ------------------- (6) --------------------

11. Do you think that recent curriculum reforms assist students to contribute to the economic development of the country ?

12. As an administrator, do you encourage your staff to adhere to the curriculum designed by the Curriculum Development Centre?

    Yes ☐ No ☐

13. Considering the vocational orientation of the Multilateral and Community High Schools, does the curriculum offered in these schools assist the graduates to be gainfully employed ?

    Yes ☐ No ☐ If no please explain why.

14. Do you think most educational programmes including curriculum changes are initiated by the government ?

    Yes ☐ No ☐

15. In your opinion are changes in curriculum achieving the national goals ?

    Yes ☐ No ☐

16. Since curriculum is what determines the learning process and outcomes of schooling, how important are the following agents in the selection and planning of curriculum ?

| | Very Important | Not so Important | Of no Importance | Undecided |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| (a) Parents | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (b) Students | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (c) Teachers | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (d) Curriculum Specialists | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (e) Government Officials | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

17. (a) Do the officials of the Ministry of Education determine the activities of your school, especially where curricula and extra curricula activities are concerned ?
Yes [] No []

(b) Which of the two do they determine more ?
Curricula [] Extra curricula []

18. How often is evaluation done in your school ?

19. What kind of evaluation is done ?

20. Of which of the following do teachers evaluate the most and the least ?

| | Most | Least |
|---|---|---|
| (a) Cognitive skill-data, knowledge, recall | [] | [] |
| (b) Psychomotor skills | [] | [] |
| (c) Affective Skills | [] | [] |
| (d) Social skills | [] | [] |
| (e) Critical thinking skills | [] | [] |

21. In what extra-curricular activities does your school participate ?

22. Are these extra-curricular activities compulsory or do they form a component of the student's evaluation ?

23. Do you normally seek the permission of parents to give approval/consent for these extra-curricular activities ?

## DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

In this section we would like to find out more about yourself as a teacher. Please answer the questions to the best of your knowledge.

1. Gender Male ☐ Female ☐

2. Age Below 30 yrs. ☐ 31-35 yrs. ☐
36-40 yrs. ☐ 41-45 yrs. ☐
46-50 yrs. ☐ 51-45 yrs. ☐
Over 55 yrs. ☐

3. Ethnicity East Indian ☐ African ☐
Chinese ☐ Mixed/Colored ☐
Amerindian ☐ Other ☐

4. Marital Status Single ☐ Married ☐
Divorced ☐ Other ☐

5. Religion Christian ☐ Hindu ☐
Muslim ☐ Other ☐

6. Place of Birth Rural ☐ Urban ☐

7. Place grew up Rural ☐ Urban ☐

8. Academic qualifications:
   (a) School Leaving Certificate ☐
   (b) College of Perceptions ☐
   (c) General Certificate of Education ☐
   (d) Caribbean Examination Council Exam ☐
   (e) Class 1, Grade 1 ☐
   (f) Degree ☐
   (g) Diploma ☐
   (h) Post graduate, M.A. ☐

9. How long have your been teaching?
Less than 10 years ☐ 10-12 years ☐
13-15 years ☐ Over 15 years ☐

10. Present salary Less than $1,500 pm ☐
$1,501 - $2,000 pm ☐
$2,501 - $3,000 pm ☐
$3,001 - $3,500 pm ☐
Over $3,500 pm ☐

Your assistance in this exercise has been tremendous and your cooperation is very much appreciated.

# APPENDIX III

## INFORMAL INTERVIEWS

A. EDUCATION PERSONNEL

FOCUSED AREAS

1. Diversification of curriculum and rationale.
2. State policies on educational programs and curriculum.
3. Selection of materials and planning of curriculum, implementation process.
4. Infrastructural facilities - adequate and competent teachers, laboratory, text books and other materials and equipment.
5. Expenditure on education.
6. Enrolment patterns - both at the primary and secondary levels.
7. Relationship between education officials and curriculum specialists.
8. Relationship between schools and the Ministry of Education.

B. CURRICULUM SPECIALISTS

FOCUSED AREAS

1. Diversification of curriculum and rationale.
2. What factors were considered in designing the curriculum - were they government policies or dictates ?
3. How governmental policies were translated into education and curriculum ?
4. How subject specialists were selected ?
5. Design of curriculum - developing objectives, selecting of content and materials, evaluation process.
6. Relationship with the Curriculum Development Centre and Teacher's Training College and schools.
7. Curriculum seminars.

## C. PRINCIPALS/SENIOR PERSONNEL OF TRAINING COLLEGES

### FOCUSED AREAS

1. Who determined programs/course content ?
2. Program/curriculum offered - kinds of skills trainees received.
3. Are skills acquired appropriate to "work" the curriculum of the primary and secondary schools ?
4. Where emphasis was placed - how to teach (methodology) or enrich the knowledge base of trainees ?
5. Number of students intake per academic year - adequate for school population ?
6. Operational costs of the colleges including student's stipend.
7. State policies on teacher education.
8. Problems with teacher education.
9. Relationship with the Teacher's Training College and the Curriculum Development Centre.

## D. GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

### FOCUSED AREAS

1. The role of education in the society.
2. Expectations of education.
3. Curriculum and societal goals.
4. Role of teachers and students in the process of national development.
5. Compatibility/incompatibility between school knowledge, skills, values and attitudes and the labour force and the economy.

# APPENDIX IV

## INFORMAL INTERVIEWS

### TRANSCRIPT 1 CHIEF EDUCATION OFFICER (ACTING)

Researcher (R) Introduces himself and explains the purpose of the Study

R Between 1965 and 1985, there have been many changes in education including curriculum reforms, could you give me some reasons why these changes were made ?

Interviewee (I) First of all, we became an independent country in 1966. As an independent country, we need to provide the kind of education that is consistent with the needs and goals of an independent society. Formerly, the education offered was a replica to that of Great Britain. Secondly, we have made education "free" from nursery to university which means that we are giving Guyanese, particularly the poor, an opportunity to access all levels of education in the country which was not possible in colonial times. Our Government's policy of "socialism" can be achieved if we provide equal opportunity for all.

R Do you see any problems with free education ?

I No system is perfect. We do realize that there are problems with the education offered, but within our constraints or limitations, we are doing well.

R You seem not to say specifically what the problems are.

Would you mind elaborate since the local newspaper (Stabroek News) reports on the crisis in the educational system ?

I You don't have to believe everything that the newspaper reports. But as you know, our major problem is the migration of our qualified and experienced teachers to North America and the Caribbean Islands and this creates a shortage of teaching personnel in the school system. Secondly, since the economy is not performing well, there is not enough money to spend on education and this obviously affects the adequate supply of text books, exercise books, laboratory facilities, materials, equipment etc. However, where text books are concerned, I must say that we need to be more careful and teachers should be more responsible in this regard by monitoring the distribution and collection of text books. It has been reported by many Education Officers that text books have been destroyed at a very rapid rate by students and the replacements are very difficult because we do not have the foreign currency to purchase new ones. Be it as it may, we welcome book donations from any charitable international organizations or private individuals locally or abroad.

R Would you be able to say what might be responsible for teachers, migrating ?

I We cannot stop people from migrating. It is their free will to do so, but I cannot say precisely why a number of teachers are migrating.

R It has been reported in the local press that secondary students are not performing well at the CXC examinations in comparison with other Caribbean countries. Is this so?

I Let me get the record straight. In terms of absolute numbers, our students may not be performing well, but we need to understand that we enter all our students to write the examinations whereas Trinidad for example, enter only those students who have a favourable chance of passing the examinations. So we can see why our failure figures are relatively higher and others lower. We do hope that with the establishment of NAFFAT which is an examination system put in place to screen students to determine who will write what subjects at what levels ie. Basic or general Proficiency, the results would be better in the future.

R I'm very much interested in the process of developing the curriculum for the schools in Guyana. Could you enlighten me on how this process works eg. how the objectives are formulated, the selection of the content and materials, the methodology used and evaluation of the various subjects ?

I There is a Curriculum Development Centre at Kingston, and I'm sure the personnel are more competent than I do in providing you with such information.

R Thank you for telling me about that. What are your views on having, in addition to curriculum specialists and other educators, teachers, parents and students involve in curriculum development ?

I I do appreciate the involvement of a wide cross section of the population in the education process. In fact, the Memorandum on Education Policy in 1990 which is the latest document prepared by the Ministry of Education has acknowledged the importance of community participation in education which obviously means the incorporation of parents and other interest groups. Further, we are trying to introduce a system whereby schools within specific locations are grouped and teachers will meet once per week during the afternoon session to discuss curriculum matters. So we have been putting in place the mechanism to have participation.

R What you just talked about are policies. How committed would be the teachers and the communities in these new programs and would there be any system put in place or personnel to monitor their implementation ?

I We hope to work these out.

R Now let us look at how State policies influence educational programs and the curriculum or what is taught in schools. Could you throw some light on this area ?

I The Assistant Chief Education Officer Planning and Development is the right person who can enlighten you on that matter, but unfortunately he is currently out of the country on "study leave".

R Is there someone acting in his position whom I may contact or any other person who may be knowledgeable in such matters ?

I Sorry, the position has been vacant and I cannot recommend anyone who might assist you.

R One last question, what kind of relationship exists between the schools and the Ministry of Education in terms of communicating new policies, programs or updating the schools on any education issues and also making the education bureaucracy more flexible ?

I As an acting CEO and I must include all my predecessors, we do send circulars to all schools in the country, communicating to the teachers, subjects of importance. In terms of the flexibility of the education bureaucracy, I'm not too sure what you mean. But if you mean more accessibility to the teachers and the public at irregular times, then this might be a problem. The education officials have a lot of work to do and if we encourage teachers and the public to visit the officials at any time, then there would be a back log of work. We want to make the system efficient.

R Thank you for taking up so much of your precious time. I do appreciate your contributions very much.

I Good luck in your study.

TRANSCRIPT 2 SENIOR LABOUR OFFICER (MINISTRY OF MANPOWER)

R Introduces self and explains purpose of Study

R What do think about the role of education in the society?

I As you know, education is important in all societies. Without education the society cannot progress. It should provide the population with the right knowledge, skills, values and attitudes for employment.

R Why did you use the word "should" rather than be more positive and say education does provide the population with knowledge etc. ?

I I use the word "should" because I'm not too sure whether the schools are producing individuals with the relevant skills and work ethics.

R This is a serious allegation. Am I to assume that you are putting the blame on the schools ?

I I'm not putting the blame on the schools or anyone. The educational system needs huge funding and this will in some way improve the quality of education. It is very frustrating to work in a ministry where the level of absenteeism is very high and new recruits cannot write proper correspondence.

R Is there anything being done to improve the level of competencies among young recruits ?

I Yes, we send them for short training courses organized by the Public Service Ministry or the Critchlow Labour

College. Most of these are evening courses. We are doing the tasks the schools are supposed to do.

R Does the training provided, help them in any way ?

I To some extent, but this is all we can do in the present circumstances.

R How do the ministries employ people ?

I First of all, we have Employment Exchange Offices in various focal areas in the country where potential employees register and whenever vacancies arise in the ministries they are employed accordingly. This system is particularly directed at low level personnel. Secondly, for the highly skilled or professional vacancies, these are advertised in the local press.

R Are these vacancies filled for professionals ?

I Not quite often.

I Why ?

I There are few applicants and those who apply may not necessarily be academically qualified.

R Why is this so ?

I Most of the qualified people migrate.

R Do you think that the salary might be unattractive to potential professional employees ?

I I wouldn't be able to say for sure. But probably it is.

R In relation to what has been said before, it has been public knowledge that there has been a 40 % vacancy rate in the various ministries. Are there any reasons for such high vacancies ?

I As I said before, there is a major brain drain in Guyana. Even those who do well in schools do not enter the labour force immediately, they move on to further training at the University and upon the completion of their programs most of them migrate.

R Do you have any evidence to support what you have said ?

I I do not have figures at hand. Probably the Statistical Bureau would. But from a batch of 28 students who graduated in Management Studies at the University of Guyana in 1984 of which I was a graduand, 24 have migrated.

R Knowing that people are migrating or leaving the job, are there any records to show the break down of the various categories of employees who are leaving ?

I No, we do not have the records.

R Why ?

I We do not have the staff to compile such records.

R I know there were such records for example in Bacchus' book "Education for Development or Underdevelopment", he provided such data. Why does this trend not continue ?

I I wouldn't be able to say, but those who did the record keeping might have resigned.

R Is there any mechanism for junior workers under-studying or working in collaboration with senior workers, so whenever someone resigned, the task would continue ?

I That's a good idea, but we do not have enough personnel.

R Why do you think that school leavers are not attracted to the public service ?

I Apart from school leavers lacking the entry academic qualifications, and bearing in mind we have reduced the entry qualifications from five subjects at the CXC and GCE "O" level to four, the poor salaries are driving them away. For example a junior civil servant earns about $1,200 a month. But after deducting transportation cost which usually accounts for approximately $900 per month, the worker has little for food, clothes and shelter. People therefore, prefer to stay at home or engage in trading or selling foreign currencies rather than working with the Government. This is very much so for those who have relatives abroad who send them money, clothes and even foodstuffs.

R As a labour officer, what kind of skills do you think the schools should teach ?

I Computering, accounting, record keeping, carpentry, joinery, technical drawings, welding, mechanics, masonry to name a few.

R Apart from computering and mechanical skills, most of these skills are taught in the schools.

I I would agree with you that these skills are taught, but from the reports we are getting, students are not competent enough for the working environment. They are inadequate in both theory and practice.

R One last question, what are some of the societal expectations of education ?

I One, to train high quality students who should be able to function effectively in the work force. Two, to train students so that they can contribute to the economic development of the country. Three, to train students with the correct values and attitudes for life and living. Four, to train students to get good jobs and more money and higher social status.

R One follow up question please, are the Guyanese schools satisfying these expectations ?

I This is very debatable and I wouldn't like to comment.

R Thank you very much. You have been of great help.

I You are welcome.

University of Alberta
Edmonton

Centre for International Education and Development
**Department of Educational Foundations**
Faculty of Education

Canada T6G 2G5

5-109 Education Building North, Telephone (403) 492-3726
Fax (403) 492-~~1310~~ 0762

September 11, 1990

The Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Education
21 Brickdam
Georgetown
Guyana

Dear Madam:

This is to introduce Mr. Kamnasaran, a lecturer in the Department of Sociology at the University of Guyana, currently he is pursuing a Ph.D. Programme in International/Intercultural Education at the University of Alberta, in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

Mr. Kamnasaran has undertaken to do his dissertation on "Curriculum Development and Social Change in Guyana - 1965-1985". The general objective of the Study is to describe and analyze Curriculum reforms in the Primary and Secondary Schools in the period 1965-1985 and how these reforms were related to Government policies and the process of national development.

He would be in Guyana for three (3) months from October to December 1990, collecting data by interviewing teachers and other education personnel. I am therefore soliciting the cooperation of the Ministry of Education in this exercise by granting him permission to conduct the interviews.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. M. K. Bacchus, Director
Centre for International Education and Development

# MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

**Cable Address:** "MINED"

IN REPLYING QUOTE
DATE HEREOF AND

No.............................

*P. O. Box 1014,*
*Georgetown,*
*Guyana.*

1990-10-24

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Permission is granted for Mr. Kamnasaran, Ph.D. Student at the University of Alberta and lecturer at the University of Guyana to carry out research on the topic "Curriculum Development and Social Change in Guyana 1965 - 1985. He will be conducting interviews with Administrative and Teaching staff of primary and secondary schools as well as ministry's officials.

Please extend the necessary courtesies to Mr. Kamnasaran.

Thanks.

Oswald Kendall
........................
Oswald Kendall
Chief Education Officer

24/10.

c.c. E.P.O.
D.C.E.O. (Admin.)
S.E.O. (G/T)
A.C.E.O. (Pri.)
A.C.E.O. (Sec.)